

# Fare Choice

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH COMMUNITY DIET PROJECT**

Welcome to the first edition of  
**Fare Choice**

the newsletter of the Scottish  
 Community Diet Project.

## WHY WE WERE SET UP

Last year the Scottish Diet Action Group, set up by the Scottish Office, produced "Eating for health - A diet action plan for Scotland" designed to achieve the dietary targets already adopted by the government in 1994. An important aspect of the action plan was a recognition that "for many people in less well off areas, there are a number of real practical obstacles to healthy eating. The plan went on to highlight "four, main but interlinking, barriers to progress:

- Limited availability of healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables, of an acceptable quality and cost.
- The difficulty and expense of travelling on public transport to large retailers.
- Lack of basic cooking skills and equipment.
- Long established dietary habits and reluctance to experiment with new foods.

One of their conclusions was the need for a Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) designed "to pursue a strategic approach to tackling the problems of people living on a low income, including a responsibility to gather and disseminate information on community initiatives and good practice; to develop ideas for new

**Copies of all the audits findings are available free, while stocks last, from Bill or Jacquie at the SCDP.**

initiatives; to identify the development potential of existing community action such as food co-operatives; to identify training needs; to work with the retail sector to identify opportunities for action; and to encourage dialogue between Health Boards and local authorities about a strategic approach to food within their areas.

**Anyone who still has not seen "Eating for Health - A Diet Action Plan for Scotland" can get a copy free from the Stationery Office by phoning 0131-479-3141 or from Bill Gray, National Project Officer, Jacquie MacIntyre, Admin Assistant, at the SCDP (address/phone no/fax no/e-mail address on back page of this newsletter).**

Another report that has influenced the remit of the SCDP was an audit on "Community Food Initiatives in Scotland" commissioned by the Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS) and published last August by the MRC Medical Sociology Unit and the Department of Human Nutrition at Glasgow University. One of its conclusions was that "a central co-ordinating body or clearing house would be helpful in providing information exchange on funding sources, business skills, models of good practice, and practical issues of stock control, storage and transport."

### Shopping List

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## COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES DATABASE

As well as hoping to take up the recommended role of *clearing house*, the SCDP will also be updating the database of community food initiatives which resulted from the audit. After some recent additions the database currently includes details on over 100 initiatives ranging from the Aberdeen Food Co-op Network to the Workers Educational Association in Fife.



The database will be incorporated into the Community Projects Database on *HEBS on CD*. There are already numerous *access points* around the country where the HEBS databases can be utilised and if you *have the technology* you can

always become an *access point* yourself by contacting HEBS. A one off 3<sup>1/4</sup>" floppy version is also available. The database can also be accessed on the internet through the website <http://www.hebs.scot.nhs.uk>. For those who think *websites* are a sign of an untidy home, or find talk of *floppies and chips* hard to digest, there are more traditional ways to find out what's going on around the country. One is to phone, write, or even visit us, here at the SCDP and we will check the database for you. A second solution, in the short term at least, is to read "Food in the Community", a directory of community food initiatives in Scotland produced jointly by HEBS and the SCDP based on the Glasgow University research.

**Some of you will have received copies of Food in the Community already. If you have not, you can get one free while stocks last from the SCDP.**

It is obviously very important that the information on the database (eg address, contact name) is as accurate as possible. If any of the details about your group change or need expanded please let us know. If you are involved in a new initiative or have been missed out of previous databases, we will gladly send you a simple form which will ensure your efforts are recognised. Finally if, for whatever reason, an initiative has come to an end, it is important that the database reflects this and gives a true picture of current practice.

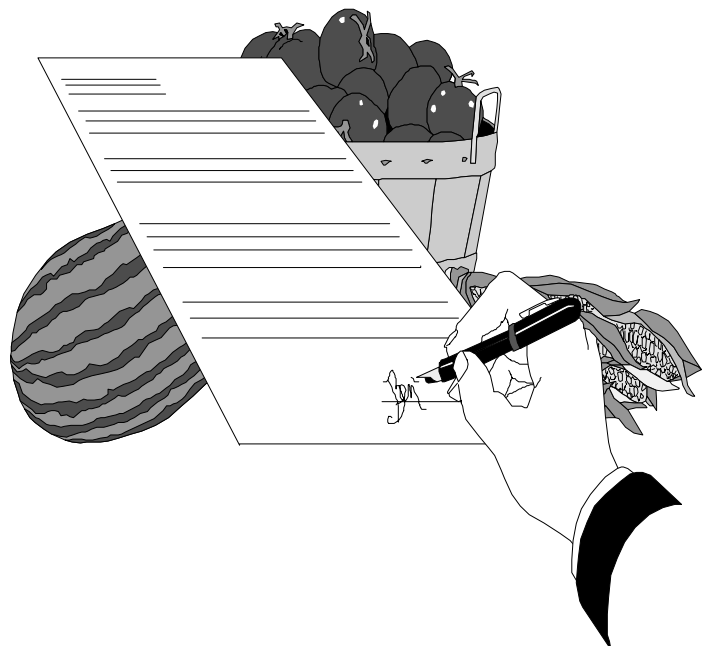
## FUNDING

The Scottish Diet Action Plan also recognised the need to add a funding aspect to the SCDP's other functions.

*"Resources should be made available by the Scottish Office...to support innovative local projects and to sustain and extend successful, effective initiatives."*

We are therefore happy to announce that grants from £500 to £7,000 can be applied for **NOW** from a total budget of £60,000. Approaches for funding will be welcomed from new *or* existing initiatives; from urban *or* rural settings; from individual groups/agencies *or* partnerships; from single funded initiatives *or* those offering match funding. We are hoping to be as flexible as possible to encourage a broad spectrum of applications. The key feature of any application however *must* be that it will involve *working within and with Scotland's low income communities to improve access to, and take-up of, a healthy varied diet.*

**Application forms and guidelines, along with advice and encouragement, are available now from SCDP. Forms (2 sides of A4) have to be returned by 30 June and successful applicants will be told they are receiving funding by 1 September.**





**A** recent London based study of 479 people aged 13-14 reported that:

- only 55% helped with cooking on a regular basis
- over 70% helped with cooking once a week or less
- almost 80% reported reading sell-by labels
- only 14.5% read nutritional information
- 60% reported eating 3 or more snacks the previous day
- 33% regularly ate fast-foods or take-away foods at school lunch times

The authors highlight the structural factors such as availability, appeal and price of alternative food options in helping young people adopt healthier dietary patterns. Roll on school meals campaigns...

*Watt RG and Sheilham A (1996) Dietary Patterns and Changes in inner city adolescents J Hum Nutr and Diet 9 451-461*

From the United States The National Centre for Disease Prevention (NCDP) latest data analysis shows that:

- 35% of US adults are “dangerously overweight”
- Obesity is said to cost \$68billion in lost working days and lower productivity
- Americans spend about \$30billion a year on low calorie foodstuffs, diet books and kits to help them shed spare tyres.

In Scotland about 58% of adult men and 49% of women are overweight.

About 20% of Scottish children are also overweight.

- Waist measurement of 37 inches + and 32 inches + for women are associated with increased risks from coronary heart disease. Measurements of 40 inches + and 35+ for men and women respectively are ever more serious and need supportive help.
- No easy treatments are available, but new approaches suggest that maintaining current weight is in itself a major achievement and even small weight losses can help ease symptoms like shortness of breath, back and joint pain.
- At last there is some recognition that traditional 1000 calorie diets are cruel and unpractical. A moderate

calorie restriction with even small amounts of extra activity (from running upstairs, walking to the bus or round the block a couple of times) is a much better start to changing shape).

- Enlisting the support of family, friends and neighbours is fairly vital to avoid the disappointments and depression associated with dieting and may even bring benefits all round.

There is some evidence to show that eating more vegetables (and fruit) is a key starter to filling up but keeping calories down.

**A** new book entitled *Poverty and Food in Welfare Societies* (1997) by Kohler BEM, Felchtinger E, Barlosius E and Dowler E (ISBN 3-89404-766-8) highlights a range of concepts, consequences, lifestyles and foodways associated with poor households and the homeless. Overall, this publication provides a (mostly) European overview of food poverty issues and social and structural ways forward. Papers cover a wide number of themes detailing nutritional, social and health problems associated with food poverty. The section entitled *Living on the Edge* highlights hunger and malnutrition in New York, single, homeless and marginalised people in London and Liverpool and an interesting innovative venture in Cologne called *The Lobby* restaurant.

*The Lobby* restaurant is a product of an association which aims to lobby for the poor and homeless through a mutually supportive group of “better-earning and poorer people with the aim of helping each other”. A central project of the association was that restaurants were set up so that “everyone pays as much as he can”. In comparison to traditional soup kitchens the *Cologne* restaurant is a proper restaurant in a large, well lit room with wall-to-wall carpeting, individual tables and a menu which changes daily with a pricing policy according to income. It aims to help foster social integration by mixing people from different backgrounds but also an opportunity to make contact with other homeless people for information and friendship as well as providing a focus for the day and a substantial meal. Across the six restaurants in the Federal republic, clientele vary and include the homeless people out of work, welfare recipients and school pupils as well as wage earners.



# Food For Thought

SCDP has a responsibility to disseminate information, highlight good practice, identify needs and encourage dialogue. One key way this will be addressed will be through organising conferences and seminars. Our first attempt at this was undoubtedly a success. *Food for Thought*, held in Edinburgh on 12 March 1997 was promoted as "Scotland's first national conference on food poverty and health."

## "A Valuable first step"

Quote from Evaluation Forms

Over 200 applications were received for 70 places. *Food for Thought 2* was hurriedly arranged and the speakers/workshop leaders all very kindly agreed to return in April. The General Election has since intervened and prevented the funding of such an event until May. This will now be held in Paisley Town Hall, with approximately 150 attending. This too is now fully booked.

## "Thought Provoking"

## "Raised Important Issues"

Quotes from Evaluation Forms



Quoted from Tim Lang's Keynote Speech

The conference was chaired by Ann Foster, Director of the Scottish Consumer Council, who was a member of the Scottish Diet Action Group and the Pennington Inquiry into the recent E-coli outbreak.

Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at Thames Valley University kicked off the proceedings with a thought provoking analysis of diet and poverty. He not only put the current debate into its historical perspective but also looked to the future and the opportunities that exist for change.

Two of the authors of 'Community Food Initiatives in Scotland', Professor Annie Anderson, now at Dundee University, and Anne Ellaway from Glasgow University then gave an insight into the breadth of work carried out by Scotland's CFI'S. They went on to highlight the benefits and constraints currently experienced and lessons for the future.





“Like minded individuals sharing ideas.”

“Very impressed by the committment and energy of people involved with initiatives.”

Quotes from Evaluation Forms

The conference delegates then received a brief description from the Scottish Community Diet Project’s National Project Officer of SCDP’s remit and the practical means by which it intends to carry it out.

After a break for lunch, the afternoon session began with an overview of the Scottish Diet Action Plan by Graham Robertson, the Divisional Director for Programmes and Communications from the Health Education Board for Scotland. This was followed by a lively open discussion on the plan, lead by Damian Killeen, Director of the Poverty Alliance.

The Delegates then split into workshops covering, Children’s Diets; Food Poverty in Rural Communities; the role of Community Projects; Working with Retailers; Anti- Poverty and Regeneration.

In summing up on the whole day Tim Lang expressed delight at the "rich experience" represented at the event but concern at how "fragmented" it was and the need to 'build". Food for Thought has certainly been one step to address this fragmentation and a key role for SCDP in the future will be to continue this process.

If you attended the event in March or if you have a place at Food for Thought 2 in May you will receive a conference report covering both events.

The remaining copies of the conference report will be available while stocks last from the SCDP from the middle of June.

If you have ideas concerning the content or structure of future seminars or conferences please get in touch.

**“We Need To Gain For Food Poverty The Profile Achieved By Food Quality”**

T Lang

# BREAKFAST IN INVERNESS

*"Dinner is the English meal, Breakfast is the Scotch. An Englishman's certainty of getting a good dinner, seems to make him indifferent about his breakfast, while the substantiality of a Scotsman's breakfast impairs, or at least might be said to impair, his interest in dinner. "*

Lord Henry Cockburn, Circuit Journeys

A hearty - but healthy - Highland Breakfast marked the launch of "Good Food, Good Health" year in the Highlands at the beginning of March. The fourth in a series of Health Board sponsored "theme" years, "Good Food, Good Health" follows years concentrating on Alcohol, Drug Taking and Sexual Health. One of the years key objectives is to "Support the development of local strategies and projects which promote healthier eating." And also to *"Consider the Health Boards response to the Scottish Diet Action Plan, and explore issues around access and availability of food and begin to address these issues through working with a multi agency group."*

Although lead by the Health Board there is a recognition of the wide range of stakeholders, as Cathy Steer from the Health Promotion team points out...



Dr Andrew Fraser, Director of Public Health and Cathy Sterr, Heart Health Officer at the launch of Highland Health Board's "Year of Food and Health".

*"We have been in communication with a variety of agencies including the Rural Forum, the Crofters' Union, Highlands and islands Enterprise, Scottish Tourist Board and the Scottish Agricultural College. With these organisations we are exploring issues such as land use and food production. our initial findings suggest that one of the most positive outcomes of the year will be a cohesive multi-agency approach to the health impact of food in the Highlands."*

One event planned for the "Year of Food and Health" is a two-day conference in November. Watch out for details.

Further information on Highland Health Boards "Year of Food and Health" is available from **Sally Amor or Cathy Steer, Health Promotion Department, Highland Health Board, Royal Northern Infirmary, Ness Walk, Inverness, IV3 SST Tel: 01463 230600.**

A useful report on rural food poverty was published in 1995 based on research conducted in the Western Isles by HEBS and Aberdeen University.

**If anyone would like a copy of "Food Availability and Food Choice in Remote and Rural Areas" you can get one from SCDP while stocks last.**

A similar study in Highland, 'End of the Road?' by Drs Sarah Skerritt and Linda McKie, will be available in May from The Public Health Dept at Highland Health Board (Nicola MacKay Tel 01463717123).

A project set up to improve the diet of people in Edinburgh opened its new premises in Leith at the beginning of March with a healthy buffet lunch. The Edinburgh Community Food Initiative has been operating from the housing department of Edinburgh City Council for almost a year and has been busy developing a one stop service for food co-ops and food projects throughout Edinburgh.

The project team (Chris, Sandra, Ciara, John, Rob, Anne & Richard) based in Tennant Street has recently become an approved training centre for the delivery of REFUS elementary food hygiene course and has recently delivered its first training course in Pilton.

Training is also available in developing and marketing food projects. A catering for your community pack is also being developed which aims to develop hygiene and customer service practice within Community cafe's.

The project will work alongside other organisations in researching the affects that government food and retail policies are having on the health of people in Edinburgh. Already strong links have been forged with nutritionists, academics and research bodies. An impressive range of research papers, leaflets, books and videos which form a food and heal library have been secured.

The main practical resource is the wholesale section of the building which stocks a broad range of wholefoods, fresh fruit and vegetables, frozen fish and a broad range of groceries.

Because Food Projects are run on a shoe string, mainly reliant on enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers, they cannot afford to throw money away by having fresh fruit and vegetables that may not be sold during their opening hours. To allow them to stock fresh produce, the Edinburgh Community Food Initiative promotes a sale and return service of fruit and vegetables.



*ECFI's Community Directors  
Back Row (L-R) Alan & Marilyn  
Front Row (L-R) Vivienne, Doris, Linda & Brian*

A realistic and non-prescriptive approach is taken to diet. The consumption of a wider range of healthy foods is encouraged without resorting to criticism of current diet. "For long term change to occur, it is important for people to gain their own critical awareness of the food they eat (or don't eat) and the effect this has on their own health" said Chris Clark the projects Co-ordinator.

**You can contact Edinburgh Community Food Initiative at 22 Tennant Street, Edinburgh, EH5 5ND. Tel 0131 467 7325**

# INFORMATION EXCHANGE

**Ferguslie Community Health Project** have worked with a number of local groups over the years tackling the barriers to a healthy diet in a number of ways, including a **bulk-buying membership club and home-produced baby foods**. They are currently looking at potential new initiatives and would welcome any advice or information from groups who have started up **milk token, "get cooking" and breast feeding initiatives**. The project can be contacted on **0141 887 9650** or by writing to **Ferguslie Community Health Project Tannahill Centre, Blackstoun Road, Paisley**.

**Broomhouse Food Project** in Edinburgh have been running a food co-op for two years. They are currently looking for advice and help on administration systems and running costs. The project can be contacted at **1 Broomhouse Market, Edinburgh, EH11 Tel 0131 467 7678**

**The Food Train** in Dumfries is keen to hear of other project's experiences of surrogate shopping and negotiating contracts with Social Work Departments. They can be contacted at **c/o Enterprise Workshops, Shirley Road, Dumfries, OGD2 OED Tel, 01387 720340**.

**Get Cooking in Renfrewshire** is the report of a pilot project run by the Health Promotion, Unit of Argyll and Clyde Health Board and Community Dieticians from Renfrewshire Health Care Trust. Copies of the report are available from **Jan Milburn, Health Promotion Unit, Argyll and Clyde Health Board, Ross House, Hawkhead Rd, Paisley, Tel 0141-842-7200**.

**The Scottish Federation of Community Food Initiatives** is a network of community food initiatives consisting of

food co-ops, growers associated health projects, groups, associated health projects, various local authority departments, Health Boards and individuals with an interest in issues of health, diet, food poverty, food safety and food security. Membership of the Federation is open to any group or individual with an interest in food and diet, upon payment of the relevant fee, which can be as little as £1.00 for individual food co-ops. To find out more about membership please call SFCFI their registered office.

**Money Matters, 986-988 Govan Road, Glasgow, G51 Tel 0141-445-5221**

**Halfway Fruit Barra** in Cambuslang is being launched on 21 April. The 'barra' is run by volunteers and is based in the local Miners Welfare Club. For further information contact **Margaret McCrone on 0141-646-1653**.

If you are doing something you think is worth sharing or are looking for advice or practical assistance or simply want to declare your existence then Fare Choice will be glad to hear from you. The next edition is due out in July.



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