



# FARE CHOICE

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH COMMUNITY DIET PROJECT

## It's all over

One thing Fare Choice has highlighted over the years is that contributions from communities to tackling Scotland's inequalities in diet and health are being made the length and breadth of the country. This edition includes work from suburban Balerno (see page 5) to rural Ullapool (see page 7).

Community based responses not only tap local knowledge and understanding of the barriers faced by many people in accessing a healthy varied diet, thus delivering locally appropriate responses, but also raise the need for action from others, both locally and nationally (occasionally internationally, see pages 2 & 5).

'Improving access' was one of three food sub-themes discovered during recent research into Healthy Living Centres (see page 4), the others being 'promoting social inclusion' and 'enhancing knowledge and skills'.

Whether at a networking event in Moray (see page 5) or a birthday celebration in Fife (see page 12), community based responses recognise they are only one part of a much bigger picture but one they contribute to in a number of fundamental ways.

Everyone should have received a special edition of Fare Choice a couple of weeks ago launching this year's small **grants scheme**. The demand for grant packs has been greater than ever and are available either from Alice or downloadable from the SCDP website.

As well as being able to launch their eighth annual small grants scheme, the Scottish Community Diet Project are delighted to be able to announce that the Scottish Executive Health Department has committed **three years future funding** to the project. SCDP will now be examining, with local groups and national agencies, the most effective role for the project over this important period.



The new food co-op at Balerno

## On this issue's menu.....

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## Policy roundup

### Holyrood [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

Presenting his fifth and final annual report, **Chief Medical Officer** Mac Armstrong, mixed the good news with the bad. He highlighted that, “*we have lived for too long with this legacy of one of the most appalling health records in Europe...but I think we are now seeing some early signs of recovery... more and more Scots are viewing health as something to be enjoyed.*” However, he also noted that, “*Health inequalities are widening and we need to tackle this head on... we have to work together to close the health inequality gap where people in more affluent areas enjoy much better health than those in deprived areas.*” The full document is downloadable from [www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/health/his04-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/health/his04-00.asp)

Details for the fourth **Healthy Scotland Convention** are just being finalised. As indicated in an earlier Fare Choice, the convention will take place on 21 November in the Radisson Hotel, Glasgow. There is a genuine interest to hear the views of all stakeholders both before and during the event. A flyer will be sent out soon to a number of projects and networks asking for opinions, and invitations will go out to a representative sample of respondents to ensure a balanced attendance on the day. The flyer will also be available to download soon on the SCDP website. The venue and programme will maximise opportunities to network, share and learn.

Scotland’s **Food and Health Council** has just had its second meeting. Information on who sits on the council, their remit and minutes of their meetings are available on [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/19133/17905](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/19133/17905)

Meanwhile anyone with an interest in food and health in Scotland is being encouraged to sign up for the **Food and Health Alliance** launched last summer (see previous Fare Choices). More details available on [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/19133/17908](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/19133/17908)

**Nutritional guidance for early years:** food choices for children aged 1-5 years in early education and childcare settings. Comments are sought on this consultation by 30 June. The

document can be found at [www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/education/ngey.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/education/ngey.pdf) or contact Susan Neilands on 0131 244 7608.

### Westminster [www.ukonline.gov.uk](http://www.ukonline.gov.uk)

Learning lessons from Europe was the theme of the latest meeting of Westminster’s Associate Parliamentary Food and Health Forum. An exploration of the Nordic (and North American) experience of **food councils** was followed by a presentation on a Europe-wide longitudinal study on the benefits of a mediterranean-style diet. The Finnish perspective was accompanied by an industry view provided by anglo-dutch multinational Unilever and an explanation of the role of the European Food Safety Authority. More information on the forum and copies of all the presentations are available on [www.fhf.org.uk](http://www.fhf.org.uk) or by phoning 020 7222 1265.

### Brussels [www.europa.eu.int](http://www.europa.eu.int)

“*It is not in the interests of consumers to allow food products to promote **claims about their nutritional and health benefits** if such claims are false or misleading and obscure the overall nutritional value of the food*” Markos Kyprianou, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection said. “*The proposal endorsed by Ministers in the European Council guarantees citizens clear, truthful and reliable information on the food they are eating. It also enables those companies whose products offer genuine health and nutritional advantages to EU citizens to compete fairly in the internal market.*” BEUC the European Consumer Organisation has been following the issue and you can find out more information from [www.beuc.org](http://www.beuc.org)

### Across the Atlantic

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made some changes to the diagram which has been used to indicate which food groups should be eaten. The new diagram called **My Pyramid** makes it clear that exercise is an important factor in balancing food intake. There is a comprehensive website where you can work out what the USDA recommends you should eat according to your age, sex and physical activity; visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) for a go.

The Scottish Community Diet Project has already started planning its **networking event** at the end of the year. The event will take place at the Quality Hotel in Glasgow on Thursday 3 November. It will be a workshop based event which starts at 10am and ends by 4pm. If you would like to register and find out more about the food access themes which will be tackled in the workshops, please contact Alice or visit the website to download the registration form.

The Scottish Community Diet Project has recently published a number of **reports** on its activities. The reports include study tours and exchanges and people's experiences from attending participatory appraisal training. The report on last year's networking event will shortly be published. All reports are available free from Alice or can be downloaded from the SCDP website [www.dietproject.org.uk](http://www.dietproject.org.uk)

The Scottish Community Diet Project has just published a short guide for **promoting healthy eating choices in community cafés**. This short guide is based on the *Glasgow Community Café Development Intervention Evaluation Report* and provides tips on improving access, availability and acceptability of affordable healthy foods based on the experience of thirteen community cafés. The intervention involved a number of elements and agencies including the Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme and Greater Glasgow Health Promotion. Hard copies of the short guide and the full evaluation report are available from Alice or can be downloaded from our website.



An example of PA training techniques

SCDP is pleased to be able to again offer a **training opportunity** for a limited number of people to attend a residential **Participatory Appraisal (PA)** course. This is the third consecutive year that the course has been delivered and many of previous participants have been successful at adopting PA methods to identify and tackle food issues in their communities. Participatory Appraisal is a family of methods and approaches that enables local people to explore issues that are of importance to them within their own communities in non-threatening ways. The process can enable communities to identify their own priorities and develop approaches to problem solving. The process aims to include as many members of a community or area as possible, particularly those who are often excluded from decision-making opportunities. PA can also be used for monitoring and evaluation and can be a useful method of exploring ideas within teams and meetings. PA methods originated in the developing world but are increasingly being used in a variety of countries and settings. Last year's participants recently reported examples of where they have been successful at employing PA techniques, such as: resolving conflict between individuals, motivating teams and increasing healthy eating awareness amongst workers and volunteers from hostels for the homeless. This year, SCDP are particularly keen to offer this training opportunity to volunteer, lay and professional staff who apply, or intend to apply these techniques within the new planning and delivery mechanisms, namely Community Planning and Community Health Partnerships, as well as within existing regional strategies/food and health action plans. This 5-day residential course will take place from 3 – 7 October 2005 at Newbattle Abbey College, Dalkeith – south of Edinburgh. The course will comprise of a mixture of theory and practical experience. To find out more please download a copy of the 2003 report. [www.dietproject.org.uk/reports/PA2003.pdf](http://www.dietproject.org.uk/reports/PA2003.pdf) or ask Alice for a copy. If you wish to apply for a place, please ask Alice for an application form.

# Scoff

An insight into the world of research provided by members of the Scottish Colloquium on Feeding and Food



## Healthy Living Centres use of food and food initiatives: “It’s not only about healthier food options, rather health in the widest sense”

Across the UK, 350 Healthy Living Centres (HLCs) are working to address health needs and to reduce health inequalities and social exclusion in communities experiencing the greatest burden of ill-health. HLCs have developed innovative activities, additional to existing services, to tackle a variety of public health issues, in numerous groups and communities.

Findings are presented from an in-depth process evaluation of six Scottish HLCs, chosen to reflect the diversity of the programme, e.g. geographical location and organisational structure. Two rounds of fieldwork were conducted, separated by a one-year interval, which consisted of semi-structured interviews, formal and informal observations of activities, meetings and daily interactions among stakeholders, and documentary review. Approximately 14 participants, including staff, partners and local people, were interviewed in each HLC. It was evident from the original funding bids that 80% of all Scottish sites intended to address diet and nutrition in their activities, compared with 48% of UK-wide HLCs. Analyses of data collected from the six Scottish HLC case studies identified three food-related sub-themes:

*Using food to promote social inclusion* - Food was often used as a ‘hook’, at promotional events and within weekly services, to attract users and to enhance service uptake. Although HLCs often provided healthy food choices such as fruit during their activities, one site, running a social drop-in, targeted potential users by providing free bacon rolls. The provision of both ‘healthy’ and ‘less healthy’ food was found to break down barriers and assist user uptake of non-food services. In addition, several HLC food co-ops were found to promote social inclusion as a secondary aim by providing

focal points for local people to meet and by enabling referrals of users to partners’ health-related services.

*Improving access to quality food choices* - Limited food choices within urban and rural areas were sometimes countered by HLC services which sought to improve access to healthier choices. As well as food co-ops, ‘fruit barras’ were developed by two HLCs. These reduced the cost of supplying healthy food to various groups. Several urban and rural HLCs also developed market gardens to provide food for local people and to reconnect the growing and eating of food. Two HLCs also sought to influence food accessibility through working with local retail structures. One urban HLC had negotiated access to a major retailer and encouraged the promotion of healthy food choices and recipe ideas to local people.

*Using food to enhance knowledge and skills* - Education and information about where to source healthy food and how to prepare a healthy meal were provided by several HLCs. Two sites offered training in food hygiene, providing basic skills for users preparing food for others and to improve skills among those seeking employment

In summary, most HLC approaches to using food to improve health and reduce inequalities were found to focus on individuals. The expectation among HLC stakeholders is that changes made to the food choices of individuals will have knock-on impacts on the health of family members and peer groups. Interestingly, a range of foods (including both ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’) were used to attract local people to services. Food was used both to address social inclusion through increasing uptake and in maintaining attendance at health improving activities, as well as being used as a means of improving health in its own right.

This study was conducted by David Rankin, Julie Truman, Kathryn Backett-Milburn, Steve Platt (all at the Research Unit in Health, Behaviour and Change, University of Edinburgh) and Mark Petticrew (at the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow). For further information about this study please contact David Rankin: 0131 651 3053 (a.d.rankin@ed.ac.uk).

## Project News

West Lothian Food Co-op Network have recently been sharing their experiences with visitors from Belgium. Three of the co-ops, in Polbeth, Knightsridge and Bridgend, were all visited by the Flemish health improvement professionals and were able to highlight how their work fitted in to the wider West Lothian Food and Health Action Plan (see Fare Choice issue 29). The visit was part of a **Eurohealthnet study into health and social inclusion** lead by Health Scotland. During their three-day stay the visitors also met the Phoenix Community Health Project in Greenock, the Community Health Exchange (CHEX) and SCDP. Eurohealthnet has produced a report highlighting all 52 local case studies from across Europe, which can be downloaded from [www.eurohealthnet.org/Eurohealthnet/documents/Social%20Exclusion/Good%20Practices.pdf](http://www.eurohealthnet.org/Eurohealthnet/documents/Social%20Exclusion/Good%20Practices.pdf)

**Glachbeg Croft education centre**, a purpose built building constructed using principles of sustainability, has now opened on the Black Isle. Glachbeg is a small farm aiming to provide a variety of education and training opportunities with farming, the countryside and the environment as contexts for learning. For more information see [www.glachbeg.org.uk](http://www.glachbeg.org.uk) or tel 01463 811923 or email [info@glachbeg.org.uk](mailto:info@glachbeg.org.uk)

A new healthy living initiative funded by **Balerno** Community Education department has opened up in Balerno Church hall. In the first hour it sold more than £120 worth of fresh produce. The co-op will be open every Tuesday morning. To find out more contact Denise Young on 0131 477 7733.

Over 80 people attended the **Moray Food and Health Event** – *From plough to plate* held in April in Elgin. The event was packed with presentations and workshops that highlighted local work such as the local 'Hungry for Success' project (part of a national project to improve food in Scottish Schools), Community Planning, and Council Food Policy as well as work by the Moray Food and Health Project. How these local projects contribute to the regional and national picture was also discussed. More information on the activities of the Moray Food and Health Project is available in Issue 31 of *Fare Choice*. A report on the Moray

Food and Health Event will be available shortly. Contact Judith Catherwood on 01343 567350 or email: [Judith.catherwood@nhs.net](mailto:Judith.catherwood@nhs.net)

Over 50 local people - producers, retailers, community workers and local interested people attended the **Islay Food Forum** event held in April and hosted by the Islay Healthy Living Centre. The event brought local producers together to consider how they could promote food from Islay to local people or the wider market. Alastair Dobson from *The Taste of Arran* gave a presentation on the successes of promoting Arran foods and discussed FOODIS - a proposal to form a marketing group dedicated to promoting produce from the Scottish Islands. Susie Chalupa from the Mull and Iona Community Trust highlighted what had been learnt in the last four years from hosting an annual Mull and Iona Food festival and developing and supporting local food producers. The Community Trust's work has included purchasing and developing a community run butchers shop and developing and supporting an abattoir, and also developing links between market gardeners, 'hobby' vegetable growers, a local delivery business, shops and hotels. The work has resulted in two regular farmers markets per month for half of the year and more local foods being available for both tourists and local people. As well as work on promoting local foods, Islay Healthy Living Centre will be running a cookery project with parents and promoting the use of wild foods. As shown in *Feeding the Interest* (a report about the local food sector available from the SCDP) the local food sector can have positive benefits on health. A community needs assessment showed that the biggest issue for people on Islay was the cost of living especially in relation to food. Islay Healthy Living Centre has been working for many years in this area to encourage local people to *Get Cooking* with real food, and to buy and use local fresh produce. For information on Islay Food Forum or Islay Healthy Living Centre call Carol Muir on 01496 810 693 or email: [carol.muir@nhs.net](mailto:carol.muir@nhs.net). For more information on the Mull and Iona Community Trust visit [www.mict.co.uk](http://www.mict.co.uk) or call Susie Chalupa on 01688 302851, email [susie@mict.co.uk](mailto:susie@mict.co.uk). For information on the *Taste of Arran* visit [www.taste-of-arran.co.uk](http://www.taste-of-arran.co.uk) or call Alistair Dobson on 01770 302374.

## Take Stock

### HealthWays - Healthy Living Centre in Ross and Cromarty

This Big Lottery funded Healthy Living Centre was set up in 2002 to help all people living in the Highland region of Ross & Cromarty to choose to live more healthily. HealthWays has a central partnership of agencies in the Highlands with local partnership groups made up of local people, and representatives of public, private and voluntary organisations.

In 2000 the Highland Council Leisure Service asked six communities to identify important health issues. As a result five themes of work were planned and the long process of seeking funding began. Healthy Hearts is one theme area and originally targetted people aged over 45 in Wester Ross. Other themes include: work with young children, mothers and the promotion of cycling and walking. Here, we focus on the healthy eating activities of the Healthy Hearts project in Wester Ross developed by three local partnerships and Healthy Hearts Co-ordinator – Fiona Timmins.

People in Wester Ross said their top health priority was improved access to fresh, affordable healthy food. Their second priority was to learn how to cook familiar foods in healthier ways and to learn about less familiar healthy foods. Linking both priorities has led to several pieces of work.

In Wester Loch Ewe, 15 local people got together in 2003 to explore the idea of community growing. This group is now called *Good for Ewe* and has developed an allotment-style garden with additional community growing plots, and supports local gardeners who want to sell excess produce. There are currently 32 members and the group, which is a co-operative and a limited company, market their excess produce through a weekly stall at the Poolewe summer market. In Ullapool, HealthWays have also assisted small producers to develop and run a regular market and to be trained in basic food hygiene.

Healthy Hearts is also developing a box scheme with the Poolewe shop. Like many rural shops Poolewe has difficulties stocking a wide selection

of quality fruit and vegetables – there is often high wastage due to unpredictable customer demand. A group of consumers will be able to order their fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis instead of making the 90 minute car trip to the nearest supermarket.

In partnership with a local NHS Highland dietician, Healthy Hearts has mapped availability, quality and presentation of fruit and vegetables in shops throughout Wester Ross and now plan to assist local shops to improve the presentation and placement of fresh produce. This will function as part of the food survey work that is required by the Highland Community Plan.

To tackle the cookery priority, seven volunteers received two days of cookery demonstration training from food consultant Wendy Barrie in the summer of 2004. Originally the plan was for the seven to carry out cookery demonstrations in their local areas. Three cookery demonstrators work this way. However, the two men on the course paired up and market themselves as *The Two Fat Gents*. By popular demand, they have undertaken cookery demonstrations at least once a week throughout Ross & Cromarty since they completed their training.

The *Two Fat Gents* deliver two styles of demonstrations: one is with groups; the other is running a stall at large events – this year they ran a stall at the Heritage Fair, attended by over 3000 people. At large events they run rolling cookery demonstrations, provide tasters and recipe cards and chat to individuals. They keep the healthy eating message subtle and market the foods as tasty, affordable and easy to cook before mentioning any health benefits. They mainly cook familiar dishes in a healthier way by making sure that they are lower fat and contain more whole grains foods, pulses, fruit and vegetables.

In the future the *Two Fat Gents* hope to run cookery courses to regularly support individuals and introduce less familiar foods. However, two unfamiliar foods which are already surprisingly successful are toasted sunflower and pumpkin seeds. The seeds are always eaten up and packets of the seeds sell out quickly whenever the *Two Fat Gents* or other workers promote them. Pumpkin

seeds are a good alternative to omega rich oily fish and a good way to increase intake of healthy omega 3 oils.

Healthy Hearts also developed six weight management groups in Wester Ross. People said they had no support to help them lose weight as small communities are not financially viable for weight loss companies such as Weight Watchers or Scottish Slimmers. And with more than 50% of men and women either overweight or obese in Wester Ross (NHS Highland Health Survey 2001) something had to be done. Since February 2004, members of the six HealthWays groups have lost a staggering 71 stone of fat between them. They provide healthy eating plans and encourage members to increase their physical activity. The weight management groups have become financially self-sufficient as trained volunteer leaders or health visitors run them.

Other **future** Healthy Heart **projects** may include cookery sessions in individual homes and promoting healthy ready meals sold at leisure centres. There are also plans to write a recipe book using and adapting favourite recipes sent in by Wester Ross residents.

**Monitoring and evaluation** is an essential part of the healthy living centre programme; HealthWays are carrying out internal evaluation and the programme is also being evaluated externally. The Healthy Hearts project consistently receives positive feed back and HealthWays projects have been successful at getting people involved in running or taking part in projects. HealthWays estimates that so far, it has reached over 17.5% of the Ross and Cromarty population.

For more information visit [www.healthways-rossandcromarty.co.uk](http://www.healthways-rossandcromarty.co.uk) or call Fiona Timmins, Healthways Healthy Hearts Co-ordinator on 01445 781 394 or email: [Fiona.timmins@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.timmins@highland.gov.uk)

## Celebrating success

HealthWays Celebration of Success event held in Ullapool in April was certainly a success itself. Over 250 Ross and Cromarty residents attended the event and were treated to shows, talks and workshops. They also got fed a delicious range of healthy foods including breakfast. Participants were given the opportunity to try out HealthWays activities – such as spin cycling and led walks. The *Two Fat Gents* ran a *ready steady cook* session. Participants heard about all the different HealthWays activities and got to see some of them in action too – such as a belly dancing and tea dancing. An entire Ross-shire primary school (consisting of eight pupils) presented a *healthy rap*. Participants could also view displays and stalls and get a chance to talk to those involved in Ross-shire activities such as



Fiona Timmins with the Two Fat Gents

*Good for Ewe* and the *Green Gym*. There was also a *health MOT* available and Indian head massage. At the end of the day there was an interactive quiz and participants were able to take part in a big prize draw which had an impressive selection of prizes donated by local companies.