



community
food and health
(scotland)

Adding to the mix

Community food initiatives and
the private sector working in partnership





About CFHS

Community Food and Health (Scotland) or CFHS aims to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity, ability and confidence to access a healthy and acceptable diet for themselves, their families and their communities. We do this by supporting work with and within low income communities that addresses health inequalities and barriers to healthy and affordable food.

Barriers being addressed by community-based initiatives are:

Availability – increasing access to fruit and vegetables of an acceptable quality and cost

Affordability – tackling not only the cost of shopping but also getting to the shops

Skills – improving confidence and skills in cooking and shopping

Culture – overcoming ingrained habits

Through our work we aim to support communities to:

- identify barriers to a healthy balanced diet
- develop local responses to addressing these barriers, and
- highlight where actions at other levels, or in other sectors, are required.

We value the experience, understanding, skills and knowledge within Scotland's community food initiatives and their unique contribution to developing and delivering policy and practice at all levels.

Acknowledgements

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Setting the scene

Introduction

Community food initiatives and the private sector have been working together for many years. There are several examples, some of which have been highlighted in previous publications¹ produced by Community Food and Health (Scotland).

This publication includes the experiences of ten community food initiatives. It looks at how and why they are working in partnership with the private sector, explores the benefits that working in this way can bring, and discusses the challenges that they have encountered.

While some have been working with the private sector for several years, for others this is very new. Those with more experience have had time to build links with a wider range of private sector and commercial organisations, and therefore are likely to have developed more, and more varied business relationships, as reflected in the examples included.

What are community food initiatives?

Community food initiatives are community-led, community-based organisations set up to improve access to, availability and take up of an affordable, varied and balanced diet in low-income communities. The types of activities they run are very diverse and include community retailing (such as food co-ops, community-run shops and fruit and vegetable stalls); community growing; skills development (eg. nutrition and cooking skills); food delivery services; community catering; and health promotion.

Because they have been established to meet the specific needs of their communities, no two are the same. For some, community food work is a small, but important, part of what they do. Some provide services for particularly vulnerable groups, eg. people with mental health issues, homeless people, older people and young parents. What they have in common is that they are making a positive difference in their communities.

About the community food initiatives

The community food initiatives included in this publication are delivering a range of community food and health activities, including growing, retailing, catering, education and training, food delivery, and food redistribution. All of them are working successfully with private sector organisations.

Most are social enterprises² or are charitable organisations with social enterprise arms³. They have adopted these business models to enable them to sell goods and services to private sector customers. Most have been operating for several years, and have adapted and developed their business models and services as circumstances have changed.

Most have a business relationship with the private sector organisations that they work with. Several receive support 'in kind' as well, such as equipment, employee time or food.

The following are brief descriptions about the community food initiatives included in this publication. Examples of their operation or services are also included. More information about their work can be obtained from the community food initiatives directly.

¹ 'Minding their own business' www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/scdp-mindtheirbusiness.pdf. 'Minding their own business too' www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/cfhsmindingtheirrownbusiness-too-3421.pdf

² Social enterprises are businesses that trade specifically for social and / or environmental purposes, with the surpluses made reinvested in these purposes.

³ Social enterprise arms (or trading arms) are wholly-owned subsidiary companies set up by charitable companies to enable them to carry out non-charitable trading activities. Any profits made by the trading subsidiaries are gifted back to the charitable companies.

CFINE (Community Food Initiatives North East) operates in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and West Lothian. It runs or supplies over 100 community food outlets throughout these areas and manages a FareShare⁴ franchise. Through its social enterprise arm, CFINE Enterprises, it sells fruit, vegetables and other foods to over 250 voluntary, public and private sector organisations, as well as individual customers.

In November 2010 CFINE purchased a fruit and vegetable wholesale and retail business in Longside in Aberdeenshire. The business is a social firm⁵ with a service level agreement⁶ with Aberdeenshire Council to provide work placements for 17 adults with learning difficulties. Previously run as a commercial business, the operation, including a shop, is now managed by the ex-owner.

The **Commonwealth Orchard** works with schools and communities across Scotland, planting and maintaining orchards and fruit trees. It provides corporate volunteering opportunities for commercial customers.

Community Food Moray was established in 2011 and is a social enterprise selling fruit, vegetables and whole grains through the 15 community food outlets it runs across Moray, as well as supplying local businesses and local groups with weekly fruit and vegetable boxes. It also runs a range of activities about healthy eating (including cooking classes, taster sessions and health promotion sessions), and, with funding from the NHS, provides emergency food boxes for people made homeless or facing urgent financial crisis. The ethos of the organisation is to source locally grown produce as much as possible.

Crescent Kitchen is a social enterprise arm of the Broomhouse Centre in Edinburgh, providing an outside catering and buffet service to various organisations across Edinburgh and the Lothians. In 2011, it was awarded a contract by a major construction company to run the on-site catering for employees working on the construction of an extension to a conference centre.

East Lothian Roots and Fruits works throughout the area, with local schools and community groups, delivering advice and support on healthy cookery, healthy eating and growing produce, and runs eight fruit and vegetable co-ops and stalls and a mobile shop. It also supplies fruit and vegetables to a privately-owned convenience store.

Edinburgh Cyrenians operates a range of services for people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and have complex needs. Focusing on 'a hand up, not a hand out', and using a holistic approach to move the people worked with from being 'the helped to the helper', it runs several social enterprises. These include the Good Food Programme, the Cyrenians Farm and the NHS Community Gardens Project. Edinburgh Cyrenians has been working in partnership with the private sector for many years.

The Good Food Programme is a social enterprise that operates a FareShare project⁷, food education and cookery classes, provides practical training and work experience opportunities and supported volunteering, provides advice and support to other organisations, working in the field of food and health, and is an accredited REHIS⁸ training centre. This programme has developed over many years, beginning with the establishment of the FareShare project in 1999.

4 FareShare is a UK charity that supports communities to relieve poverty by promoting, developing and supporting the redistribution of quality food that is surplus and fit-for-purpose, and by providing training and education www.fareshare.org.uk

5 Social firms are a distinct type of social enterprise. They are recognised internationally as market-led enterprises, working in a wide range of sectors with a specific social mission to create employment for people most disadvantaged in the labour market. www.socialfirms.org.uk.

6 Service level agreements are agreements or contracts with suppliers that define the service they must provide and the level of service to be delivered, and which also set out responsibilities and priorities.

7 Edinburgh Cyrenians Fareshare project delivers over nine tonnes of surplus food each week to over 40 projects.

8 REHIS - The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) is an independent charity with the main objective of promoting the advancement of environmental health. It is the awarding body for the Elementary Food Hygiene and Elementary Food and Health courses www.rehis.co.uk

The Cyrenians Farm is also a social enterprise. As well as providing residential care for vulnerable young people within the farm community, the farm grows a range of organic fruit and vegetables and rears chickens. The Farm also runs corporate team challenges.

The NHS Lothian Community Garden project has developed two gardens, with a third due to start in 2012. The project delivers a range of projects, bringing together hospital communities, local residents and interest groups.

The **Food Train** operates a shopping delivery service for older people in Dumfries and Galloway, West Lothian, Stirling and Dundee local authority areas. The service would not be able to operate without the support of local retailers. The organisation also runs a household support service and a befriending service in one area, and plans to extend these to the others. It hopes to develop more services in other local authority areas.

Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership delivers a range of food and health activities across North and South Lanarkshire. These include supporting, supplying or running food co-ops and fruit stalls, including in NHS premises. It sells fresh produce to a small number of commercial customers, and is investigating other potential business opportunities, including cookery courses and training, and working with local food producers.

Lossiemouth Senior Citizens Luncheon Club has been running a lunch club for older people living in the area for over 25 years. The Club is managed by the members and run entirely by volunteers. The club meets twice a week in the Beach Bar, a family-run restaurant in Lossiemouth, which cooks and serves an affordable two-course meal.



Why work together?

The community food initiatives contributing to this publication recognised that working in partnership with the private sector needs to result in 'win-win': both partners have to gain business benefits from working together.

The motivating factors for developing working partnerships were varied. For some, this has been because of more opportunities to do so. For others, a reduction in grant funding sources has led them to look for other ways of bringing resources into their organisations.

Becoming more financially sustainable and reducing the need for external funding was a driver for all of the community food initiatives. For most, this is the main impetus for developing work with the private sector.

Some had identified gaps in services that businesses were looking for but were not being met by the commercial sector, and had developed services to fill these gaps.

Others recognised that they had a unique selling point that could be developed into an income generating idea.

Being able to access support from the private sector was an important driver for many. One community food initiative, for example, would not be able to operate without the active support of local supermarkets and shops.

Changes to the culture within private sector organisations, particularly relating to the growing awareness of corporate social responsibility⁹, have increased the opportunities for community food initiatives to work with the private sector. Companies are being encouraged to become 'responsible businesses', with many, as a result, actively seeking community and voluntary organisations to work with.

The increasing emphasis on encouraging employers to assist their employees to improve their health, eg. with the support provided through the Healthy Working Lives¹⁰ programme, has also opened up opportunities for community food initiatives to engage with the private sector.

They may develop partnerships with private businesses when other sectors, including the public sector, are not able, or are no longer able, to deliver the services they need. Several lunch clubs are provided by the private sector¹¹.

Until 2009, the meals for Lossiemouth Senior Citizens Luncheon Club were provided by the local authority, and the club met in a local community centre. When they were informed that the cost of the meals was likely to rise substantially, the club's committee looked for an affordable alternative. A restaurant owner, and the restaurant's chef, were keen to help the club, and offered to provide a two-course meal twice a week at a realistic price. The lunches are very popular, with 15-20 people attending each meal.

⁹ Corporate social responsibility is how companies address the social, environmental and economic impacts of their operation on the environment, employees, consumer and communities, amongst other stakeholders. www.bis.gov.uk

¹⁰ Healthy Working Lives is an award programme which supports employers to develop health promotion and safety within the workplace. The programme is managed by the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives. www.healthyworkinglives.com.

¹¹ See CFHS's publication, 'A bite and a blether', www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/lunch-club-online-3662.pdf



The policy context

Recipe for Success¹², Scotland's National Food and Drink Policy, recognises the role of the private sector in ensuring that food is available and affordable for all. The Policy highlights the role of convenience stores, and the support available for them through the Scottish Government-funded Scottish Grocers Federation's Healthy Living Programme. CFHS works closely with the Programme so that community food retailers can access its training and resources. Since 2006 over 40 community food retailers have done so.

Recipe for Success also acknowledges the role of community food groups and social enterprises, and that there is a need to identify how they can be supported.

The Scottish Government is committed to supporting the third sector to develop new markets for its services, including in the private sector. This is partly in response to less funding being available for the sector, but also in recognition of the increasingly important role of third sector organisations in delivering services for the public and private sectors.

Significant funding is being invested by the Scottish Government in programmes to support third sector organisations to develop new markets. This includes the 'Developing Markets for Third Sector Providers' programme, being delivered by Ready for Business¹³. The programme aims to raise awareness of the third sector within public sector procurement teams and result in more third sector organisations becoming involved in delivering services for the public sector. The programme will encourage the use of community benefit clauses¹⁴ in public contracts. This may increase opportunities for third sector organisations, including community food initiatives, to become partners in these contracts.

Ready for Business builds on actions included in the Scottish Government's Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan, which was implemented between 2008 and 2011. This recognised that encouraging collaboration with the private sector could assist enterprising third sector organisations to access new markets.

12 www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/06/25133322/11

13 Ready for Business is a third sector led consortium composed of Ready for Business LLP, KPMG, Social Value Lab and MacRoberts LLP.

14 Community Benefit Clauses (CBCs) are contractual clauses which can be used to build a range of economic, social or environmental conditions into the delivery of public contracts.

What are the factors that ensure that working together is successful?

The following success factors were highlighted by one or more of the community food initiatives.

Two have generated business from companies that want to demonstrate their commitment to corporate social responsibility.

A major construction company won the contract to build the extension to a conference centre in Edinburgh. The contract, awarded by the City of Edinburgh Council, contained a community benefit clause. With this clause in place, the construction company was looking to source companies to work on the contract. Crescent Kitchen's name was mentioned to the construction company at a business meeting with the local authority. The company then approached Crescent Kitchen about providing on-site catering. The two initially agreed to run a trial to see if the partnership would work: after six weeks it had proved successful, with the Crescent Kitchen now running the on-site catering until the end of 2012.

The Commonwealth Orchard runs corporate volunteering sessions for companies that want to provide their staff with opportunities to meet and socialise outside work, while doing something that benefits communities.

The Healthy Working Lives programme has also generated new business for some.

Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership delivers fruit and vegetables to a number of companies that are part of the Healthy Working Lives programme.

In order to fulfil one of the criteria of the Scotland's Health at Work programme (the predecessor of Healthy Working Lives), an oil company that was looking for a fruit and vegetable supplier approached CFINE. The company became CFINE's first enterprise customer.





It can be difficult for community food initiatives new to working with the private sector to build the credibility required to attract customers or support. One did this by gaining the support of a successful and well-connected local business person who lent credibility to the organisation while they built their own.

The need to build and maintain good relationships with their private sector customers and supporters was identified by several. Two stated that building these relationships has resulted in increased business, or the provision of additional support or expertise. For one, the key to building successful relationships was securing the support of a 'champion' – someone well-known and well-respected within the private sector who promotes its work and opens doors into other businesses. Another that works with larger businesses highlighted the importance of identifying someone within the company who would 'champion' its work throughout the organisation.

Some community food initiatives identified that they had the skills, expertise and resources to provide services to meet needs within the private and commercial sector. For most, these services were an extension of those being run as part of their community food and health activities.

The Broomhouse Centre was already running a café training project and Crescent Kitchen when approached about the latter setting up on-site catering.

Edinburgh Community Food, Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership and CFINE had built up many years' experience of selling fruit and vegetables in communities before starting to sell to commercial customers.

East Lothian Roots and Fruits' reputation for selling affordable, quality fresh produce in local communities helped it secure the sale of fruit and vegetables to a local convenience store.

Providing a professional service that meets the high standards expected by private sector customers is essential. Two community food initiatives suggested that others wanting to work with the private sector needed to 'up their game' to ensure their services are competitive and comparable with those available from commercial businesses.

Community Food Moray is supplying local companies with fruit and vegetables at competitive commercial rates. It hopes to expand its links with the businesses by offering healthy fresh soup and fruit platters.

One also suggested that 'seeing is believing', and that its links with the private sector are strengthened by providing opportunities for employees to take part in its activities.

What are the benefits for both?

To make the partnership working successful, both the private sector and community food initiatives need to benefit from the relationship. For both, the most important benefit of working together is financial.

For community food initiatives, this may be as a result of increasing income through the sale of goods or services, or from reducing costs (including through 'in kind' support).

An organic farm donates vegetables, rejected as unsellable by supermarkets due to being the wrong size or shape, to Community Food Moray. This reduces their produce costs, with the savings made passed on to customers through reduced sales costs. The produce is a great assistance with the emergency food boxes. Any remaining produce is made into soup, and sold in the outlet shop.

For the private sector, the financial benefits gained from working with community food initiatives may be equally as important, especially in difficult economic times.

The Food Train's four shopping delivery schemes rely on the goodwill and support of local supermarkets and shops. While assisting the volunteers to make up the orders for the schemes' customers takes up some staff time, it also generates sales for the shops that they may not have otherwise.

For the restaurant providing the lunches, hosting the Lossiemouth Senior Citizens Luncheon Club brings in regular custom and a steady income throughout the year. In return, the restaurant's staff is very supportive, putting on special menus to celebrate members' birthdays and other special occasions, such as Burns Night and Christmas.

Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership is committed to buying locally-grown produce wherever possible. As well as reducing the produce and transport costs for the community food initiative, selling directly to the retailer can increase the producers' income.

Being able to purchase smaller amounts of fruit and vegetables from East Lothian Roots and Fruits has saved the convenience store money by reducing the amount of fresh produce it wastes.



Most of the community food initiatives benefited greatly from 'in kind' support. This included business advice, which was delivered both formally and informally.

Through the Realise Mentoring¹⁵ programme, the manager of Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership has been mentored by a senior member of staff from a major Scottish company. The Crescent Kitchen also received mentoring from a volunteer business adviser through this programme, run by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce. Edinburgh Community Food also benefited from free marketing advice.

Some wanted to embed this support within their organisations.

Edinburgh Community Food recognised that to become more enterprising it needed to bring additional skills into its governing body. It sought out new board members, including from private sector organisations, to acquire the specific business skills and expertise required.

When the support received through the Realise Mentoring programme ended, the mentor working with the Crescent Kitchen joined the board of the Broomhouse Centre. The Kitchen also received support from a catering consultant and the business director of another successful social enterprise.

However, the learning from developing these relationships is often two-way.

As a result of building a good working relationship, Edinburgh Cyrenians has benefited from longer-term staff secondments from a major commercial organisation. The secondees' business experience and expertise has assisted its organisational development. In return, working with the Cyrenians has resulted in personal and career development for the secondees.

For some of the community food initiatives a major benefit of working with the private sector has been the donation of resources, including equipment, services, employee time, food and finance.

Edinburgh Cyrenians has a long track record of attracting donations of equipment and gifts in kind. This has included a refrigeration room, freezer unit, cold room and shelving from supermarkets that were being refurbished. More recently, the Cyrenians Farm was donated a new tractor, which has allowed development to full field production. The NHS Community Gardens project facilitates corporate team building and challenges, and has also benefitted from support from the business community.

During 2011, a local bank provided a member of staff to work with the Food Train for one morning each week. The staff member joined The Food Train's shopping team in Dumfries, helping to make up grocery orders.

As well as donations from a local organic grower, Community Food Moray is also donated fresh produce from two local farmers and non-perishable foods from three local businesses that trade internationally. The non-perishable foods are used in the food boxes and Christmas hampers.

Providing corporate volunteering is becoming more popular amongst community food initiatives. For some, corporate volunteering is vital for their organisations; two would not be able to run some of their food and health activities without the support of corporate volunteers. For one, working with corporate volunteers has 'kick-started' community activity in some communities; seeing the results of the corporate volunteers' work has motivated community members to develop other activities.

Those running corporate volunteering opportunities may receive a management fee from some of the companies participating. The companies may also provide materials or a materials budget. This reduces the need for the community food initiatives to seek external funding.

¹⁵ Realise Mentoring was a Scottish Government-funded programme which provided business mentoring support to social enterprises and third sector organisations. The programme ended in March 2011.

For some businesses, working with community food initiatives assists them to meet their corporate social responsibility aims or Healthy Working Lives programme requirements.

CFINE has been selling to commercial customers for over ten years. It began by selling small amounts of fresh fruit and vegetables to a few oil companies based in Aberdeen. It now sells to over 50 oil sector companies and a number of other commercial organisations, including butchers, bakers, restaurants and take-aways. What encourages some of the oil companies to buy from CFINE rather than 'traditional' commercial fruit and vegetable sellers, is their desire to meet corporate social responsibility and/or Healthy Working Lives outcomes. However, the main selling points are the quality of CFINE's produce and service, and produce price.

For some, supporting community food initiatives has provided them with opportunities to promote their businesses.

The Food Train has attracted a significant 'in kind' support from local companies (in addition to the support provided by supermarket and shops). For example, some of its vehicle maintenance is carried out by a local garage, which provides this service at reduced cost. In return, the vehicles display the garage's name and logo.

Providing opportunities for private and voluntary and community sectors to work together helps break down barriers and increases the opportunities for both to develop a better understanding of each other.

One community food initiative worked with a group of corporate volunteers from a national newspaper, planting fruit trees in a disadvantaged inner city area. The newspaper had expressed some negative views about the area in the past. During the tree-planting session, the staff met local community members. Working alongside each other enabled both to find out more about the other, and encourage each to change their opinions about the other.

Edinburgh Cyrenians also highlighted this. Its corporate team challenges provide an opportunity for its corporate partners to work on the farm for a day whilst team building, often working with young people with issues around homelessness. As well as contributing to the ongoing development of the farm, working together gives both the corporate partners and young people the chance to find out about each other, helping to change perceptions.

Two of the community food initiatives are FareShare franchisees, redistributing surplus foods obtained from food retailers and suppliers to organisations working with disadvantaged groups, and diverting this from landfill. All are reducing the amount of food waste generated and reducing the food disposal costs for the retailers and suppliers.

Another is also reducing food waste, including that produced by a local grower.

Community Food Moray is committed to reducing food waste, for example through selling and using the surplus vegetables donated by the organic farmer. Its soup production also reduces produce waste. In addition its fruit and vegetable box scheme enables customers to order the quantities they require, reducing their food waste. As well as saving money, all of these also generate additional income for Community Food Moray.

What about the challenges?

All of the community food initiatives were very positive about working in partnership with the private sector. However, it had not always been easy; some had to overcome challenges. Others continued to face difficulties.

They may lack the skills or capacity to develop a new business idea or build and develop relationships with potential private sector customers. Finding resources to enable them to build their capacity or acquire the skills may be difficult.

Without additional capacity, it may also be difficult for them to identify other services that the private sector is willing to purchase.

Two had made initial contact with potential private sector customers, but lacked staffing to follow this up. One recognised a need for a business development person, and was investigating if this role could be developed from within the existing staff team.

One community food initiative was awarded funding from the Scottish Government's Enterprise Growth Fund¹⁶ to employ a commercial manager, in order to reduce costs and generate more commercial sales.

Two had previously received short-term funding to employ business development staff. For one, the experience was not positive with no additional customers gained. Increasing sales is a priority for the community food initiative, to support its sustainability; after discussion by the board of directors, the deputy and chief executive have taken over the function of generating sales. The other had a very short timescale to recruit and employ a member of staff. This, alongside other factors outwith its control, resulted in the staff member not having enough time to develop business ideas or generate new private sector customers.

After missing out on an opportunity to develop a business opportunity, another took steps to address its lack of expertise.

Since its start up in March 2010, Crescent Kitchen has found its journey both exciting and challenging. Six months after launching it was approached by a housing association to manage a catering facility. However, at the time it lacked experience about contracts and the management committee had little expertise in this area. The contract was offered to another supplier. Since then, Crescent Kitchen has addressed these issues, strengthening its management committee by bringing in members with the expertise it requires, and building good links with business people who can provide specialist advice.

Red tape and company procedures can hinder community food initiatives, particularly when working with larger organisations.

Two of the community food initiatives that run fruit and vegetable stalls in NHS premises found establishing stalls in hospitals built under the PPP¹⁷ programme challenging. Identifying the right contacts within the commercial companies managing the hospital facilities was not always easy. Concerns about potential competition with other retailers were also highlighted by the companies. For both, it took longer to establish the stalls than in other hospitals in the same NHS Board areas.

In order to deliver a team building session, one community food initiative had to liaise with the company's headquarters rather than the local site. The company's procedures made arranging the session more difficult than had been expected.

An inability to attract new customers because of competition from private sector providers and an inability to match commercial prices were raised by some. This is particularly relevant to those that are selling fresh produce, where there is increasing competition from supermarkets and other suppliers.

¹⁶ The Enterprise Growth Fund was a Scottish Government funding programme that ran in 2011-12. It aimed to help the long term sustainability of third sector organisations through supporting the development of their organisational structures and/or sustainable income streams.

¹⁷ PPP - Public-private partnerships (PPP) are public or private business ventures that are funded, developed and operated through a partnership of public and private sector organisations.

Finding a marketing message that would attract private sector customers, while emphasising its core purpose, was highlighted as an issue by one. It continues to try to tell its 'story': how the sale of fruit and vegetables enables it to meet its core purpose of removing disadvantage for vulnerable individuals, families and communities.

Another suggested that companies will be interested in buying services if these are interesting or innovative, and that other community food initiatives need to 'think out of the box'. The type of activities that it offers is attracting an increasing number of commercial customers.

One community food initiative highlighted the danger of mission drift and losing sight of its aims when developing work with private sector customers.

The need to calculate risk was also highlighted by another community food initiative.

The need to make the 'right' choices about business opportunities was highlighted by the same organisation. This included, weighing up the benefits against possible threats, such as draining their financial resources and placing the organisation at risk. The need for good communication, to ensure that everyone is kept fully informed and has bought into the development, was also emphasised.

This community food initiative also highlighted the amount of time and effort that can be put into developing a business idea that does not progress, and that developing some opportunities might need an initial financial outlay, incurring expense that may not be recouped.

It also highlighted the benefit of having a 'critical friend' who can provide impartial but informed advice.

Summing up

The opportunities for community food initiatives and the private sector to work together are growing. The commitment of the Scottish Government to support third sector organisations to develop new markets for their goods and services, allied with an increasing recognition of corporate social responsibility, means that there has never been a better time for them to build working links with the private sector.

While there are challenges, the experiences of community food initiatives highlighted in this publication shows that working in partnership with the private sector can bring significant benefits to both.



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