

The Milton Keynes Foodcheck

Introduction

One of the key aims of the Food MK project has been to try and understand what support local food producers in and around the new city need and how best this support can be delivered. In order to do this it was essential to understand in detail what the local food sector is really like, and how it interrelates, if at all, with mainstream food businesses.

For the first time an analysis has been carried out of the current activity in the local food economy in Milton Keynes, and this report outlines the results.

The information has been gathered using a community learning tool called the Foodcheck. The Foodcheck is a methodology developed by the Countryside Agency and Action for Market Towns as part of the Market Towns Healthcheck process. It can be used to assess the shape of the local food economy, and is ultimately designed to enable a local community to take greater control over their local food economy.

The Foodcheck was piloted by Bridport in Dorset and Faringdon in Oxfordshire, both of which are sister Beacon Towns to Wolverton. Wolverton's links with these two towns, together with the development of Wolverton farmers market, led us to consider using the Foodcheck as a tool for understanding the state of the food economy in Wolverton. In order to reflect the interrelationship between Wolverton and the new City of Milton Keynes and to acknowledge the connections to the surrounding rural area, we decided to increase the scope of the work beyond the traditional market town boundary.

The Foodcheck has therefore been used to provide a snapshot of the local food economy in the Borough of Milton Keynes.

We are the first 'city' to have used the Foodcheck methodology and as such have adapted the toolkit to reflect our particular circumstances within Milton Keynes. As a result the information gathered and the recommendations that have come out of the process are different to what you might have expected in a traditional market town.

How Did The Project Come About?

The Food MK project took place between May and October 2006, funded by The Countryside Agency and carried out by Food Train.

Food Train, a social enterprise established to run community food projects in and around Milton Keynes, operates the twice-monthly farmers market in Wolverton. The Wolverton farmers market, which is the only community operated market in Milton Keynes, was established in 2004, and draws producers who operate within 30 miles of city.

The Food MK project arose as a direct result of the difficulties encountered in finding producers to attend the farmers market. All but two of the eleven producers who currently sell at the market are drawn from outside of the Milton Keynes Borough. The exceptions are G. Adderson Dairy, based in North Crawley near Newport Pagnell and Harvest Bakery based in Astwood.

Food Train is seeking to develop Wolverton farmers market in such a way that local food enterprises are supported, but having carried out some rudimentary

research quickly established what appeared to be an absence of local producers in the Milton Keynes Borough.

This led to a number of important questions being raised, which formed the basis of the Food MK project:

- What is being farmed in and around the new city?
- What is the food sector in MK like?
- What are the needs of local food producers in the area?
- Is a farming renaissance in and around Milton Keynes desirable or even possible?
- Could a new sort of ‘farming’, such as community supported agriculture, happen within the urban area of Milton Keynes?

This section of the report begins by considering the methodology used and the structure of the report. It then looks in turn at each aspect of the Foodcheck process, giving facts and figures about the Milton Keynes food sector, information about community food initiatives already taking place in the new city, local producer needs and consumer attitudes to local food. It concludes with a summary of the support systems currently available to the local food sector and the development support needed. A number of recommended actions arising from the Foodcheck can be found in section 5, the **Food MK Action Plan**.

Why Did We Need To Do This Now?

Milton Keynes is undergoing a period of accelerated growth which will see it become a city of regional significance over the next thirty years. Much attention has, quite rightly, been focused on ensuring that the infrastructure needed to support growth – schools, health services and transport – is in place. However little, if any, attention has been given to the local food economy, despite the economic, environmental and health benefits that a thriving local food economy can bring.

The geographical location of Milton Keynes and its historical administrative arrangements mean that often where Milton Keynes is, is unclear. Is it in the South East or South Midlands, or both? What is its relationship to Buckinghamshire? Should it be linked to Berkshire and Oxfordshire or are its links to Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire stronger?

So, when we look at defining food which is ‘local’ to Milton Keynes the confusion might well be exacerbated! Local food does not have a legal definition, unlike the term organic, but the Soil Association has developed the following definition to describe a sustainable, local food economy:

“A system of producing, processing and trading, primarily of organic and sustainable forms of food production, where the physical and economic activity is largely contained and controlled within the locality or region where it was produced, which delivers health, economic, environmental and social benefits to the communities in those areas.”

Recently a number of projects (such as The Countryside Agency's 'Eat the View' programme) have focused on linking landscape and regional identity to food products. They have successfully communicated the value of supporting food production as a way of celebrating regional identity and culture. From pork pies, to potatoes and cider, regional food really is experiencing a renaissance.

However, regional food is different to local food. It can be consumed anywhere and everywhere and its method of production may be as industrial as for any other commodity produced in the area.

Local food, however, is always consumed locally. This fact gives us a real opportunity to use local food to promote Milton Keynes as a sustainable city and a way of preserving our unique urban/rural landscape by giving people a sense of place and identity. We return to this idea later in the report and when we consider the actions that might be needed to support the local food economy.

Methodology For The Milton Keynes Foodcheck

In carrying out the Foodcheck process in Milton Keynes, our key objective was to make an initial assessment of the local food sector in the Borough of Milton Keynes and develop an action plan which will support its sustainable development.

Our methodology for the Foodcheck consisted of a four month work programme which included a number of elements:

- Reviewing relevant research and data
- Auditing the local food system and collecting data
- Interviewing local primary producers
- Mapping the community food sector
- Surveying consumers about their attitude to local food
- Reviewing support available to local food initiatives
- Preparing an action plan

The review of relevant research and data involved looking at the rural heritage of Milton Keynes to try to get to grips with the relationship we have with our agricultural past, in order to understand the value placed on it for the future.

The audit collected basic contact and product information from organisations and businesses within the Borough connected to the following aspects of the food chain:

- Primary production
- Processing
- Distribution
- Retail and catering
- Waste disposal and recycling

A database was created to store this information, and extracts from it are included in the report. It currently holds information about over 300 food businesses in the Milton Keynes Borough area.

Using the database, a range of local producers were contacted and asked a number of more detailed questions about their business and needs. A standard questionnaire was used for these interviews and it is contained in Appendix 1 of this report.

Mapping the community food sector involved making contact and links with grass roots organisations running practical food projects. This was done via contact with parish councils, MKCVO, MK Council and local schools. A list of contact details was put together which is contained in Appendix 2 of this report. It is also presented within the report as a location map.

The mapping work also involved an attempt to understand what people think about local food. Due to time and resource constraints, we concentrated on trying to gather qualitative information about consumer attitudes to local food.

For the purposes of the report the information has been presented using the following definitions:

- Mainstream food businesses – producers, processors, distributors and retailers
- Community food initiatives – including home produce, allotments, community gardens, food co-ops and community cafés
- Local food pioneers – including farmers markets, box schemes, farm shops and community supported agriculture (see section 3, **Eat The City** for more information on CSAs)
- Support and Development projects – including initiatives in the voluntary, statutory and private sectors such as local food networks, regeneration initiatives and marketing programmes by farmer co-operatives

The Foodcheck report gives us an overview of the local food sector in Milton Keynes.

It brings together, for the first time, information about food sector businesses operating in Milton Keynes. It has also brought together information about the emerging community food sector which we hope will prove useful in developing more targeted support.

The report is not fully comprehensive, and further work is needed to refine the information gathered in order to make sure data is as useful as it can be, particularly in order to provide an initial baseline for mapping food access and for developing further understanding of the needs of local producers. Recommendations regarding this work are contained in section 5, the **Food MK Action Plan**.

Review Of Research & Data

In order to understand how the local food economy became what it is today, it is vital to consider the natural environment of Milton Keynes, its agricultural history and how they shaped its development as a new town.

The Natural Environment Of Milton Keynes

English Nature (now part of Natural England) identifies most of the Borough as part of a wider natural area known as the West Anglian Plain, which includes the clay vales of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.¹

Even before the coming of the city, this natural landscape had been shaped almost entirely by farming practices, leaving little 'natural' vegetation.²

In what was to become Milton Keynes, the fertile river meadows of the Ouse and Ouzel had resulted in the early development of arable production and grazing cattle on small mixed farms, with a split between grassland in the south and west, moving to arable in the east.

In 1967, the government called for a new town to be developed to accommodate an incoming population of 150,000 Londoners over a period of 20 years. The designated area was almost 9,000 hectares of north Buckinghamshire agricultural land. It included the existing towns of Bletchley, Stony Stratford, Wolverton and New Bradwell, together with 13 villages and the brickfields to the south west of

1 Countryside Commission and English Nature, 1997

2 England Rural Development Programme, 2003

Bletchley.

Agriculture & The Growth Of The New Town

Milton Keynes was designed according to garden city principles – integrated landscapes which permeate throughout the built environment.

This design principle was and still is a blessing for productive land use. The early efforts to retain agriculture and forestry within the developing city are reflected in the linear parks which meander through the built environment and contain significant areas of grazing pasture and willow coppice.

Following their creation by the development corporation, these parks are now under the stewardship of The Parks Trust, an independent body responsible for 4,500 acres of river valleys, woodlands, lakesides, parks and landscaped areas alongside the main roads – about 20 percent of the new city area.

Milton Keynes Council also has a management responsibility for some urban local parks, recreation grounds, open spaces and verges throughout the city.

Despite the retention of some pasture and woodland within the city, most of the small farms were lost to the bulldozer. As the new city developed its modern shopping facilities, connection to the land as the source of our food was lost.

Agriculture In The City Today

Today, Milton Keynes forms a ‘transitional’ area between largely arable farming in the east, with wheat and oilseed rape being the main crops, to a more pastoral west with an increase in livestock farming.³

There are around sixty working farms in the Borough and almost all agricultural activity is arable and livestock. We believe there is a substantial amount of agricultural land bought up by developers and not in production though figures for this are not available.

However, as indicated above, farming is not entirely restricted to the Borough’s rural areas. In addition to the concrete cows, real cattle and sheep can be seen grazing in the open fields licensed to graziers by the Parks Trust who are actively pursuing the development of their own brand of farmed produce.

The stewardship of new green spaces created in the expansion areas is likely to be taken on by The Parks Trust. Encouragingly, their Strategic Plan for the Green Estate 2006 sets out a vision for delivering more productive landscape within the city by “*joining with others in the city in initiatives to increase the amount of food grown locally*”.⁴

It is anticipated the Milton Keynes Open Space Strategy and Landscape Character Study will soon be reviewed. This will feed into the new Local Development Frameworks as an evidence base for landscape related policies. We expect the Food MK project to feed into this process, calling for the recognition of food production as a sustainable use for green space within the city and actions around this are set out in section 5, the **Food MK Action Plan**.

3 Milton Keynes Council, 2001

4 Parks Trust, 2006

The figures below, sourced from DEFRA's agricultural survey in 2003, give an idea of the levels of land used for agricultural production. Included are specific figures for the Parks Trust grazing within the city boundary. For comparison, neighbouring county Bedfordshire has 43,138 arable hectares and 1,075 hectares of vegetables grown in the open.

Total Arable	7006.1 Hectares
Rough grazing	184.8
Rough grazing within Parks Trust estate	300
Grassland	4506
Set aside	1194
Vegetables grown in the open	14.9
Top fruit	0.8
Small fruit	4.4
Total cattle	3271
Total pigs	190
Total sheep	20363
Total goats	58
Total chickens	43517
Total ducks	45
Total geese	119

(DEFRA Agricultural Survey, 2003)

Food Sector Audit

This section of the report summarises the findings from collecting data on existing food businesses in the Borough. There was no existing single source of data so we dedicated a significant part of the Foodcheck process to collating and verifying data from a variety of mainly web and print based sources.

We focused on primary producers, processing, retail and food waste disposal. Catering and food service is mentioned briefly but was not the main focus due to its size and diversity as a sector and a lack of time and resources within this project to cover it. The work resulted in a database of 380 entries which have been summarised below.

Mainstream Food Businesses

Primary Production

There are around 60 working farms in the Borough of Milton Keynes; most are arable and livestock. Meat from these farms does find its way into local butchers but this is not well promoted. Finding local meat in Milton Keynes is a case of 'being in the know'.

There are two large dairies – G.Adderson in North Crawley and Hill Farm in Haversham. G. Adderson sells at local farmers markets and operates a milk round which reaches into the city as far as Newport Pagnell. They are one of a small number of dairies in the UK who still produce unpasteurised milk (green top).

Hill Farm has a large ASDA contract for milk and is developing an ice cream product which they hope to market locally.

In terms of vegetables there is no significant commercial production apart from asparagus grown at Moulsoe in the east of the city, sold as pick your own and at the farm gate.

Milton Keynes has an award winning beekeeper running 30 hives in various city locations and selling solely at farmers markets. There are a number of other beekeepers – in Simpson, Castlethorpe and Newton Blossomville, which may reflect the growing popularity of beekeeping described in section 3, **Eat The City**.

There is an established apple orchard in the city which was planted by the Development Corporation in 1977 and until recently grapes for winemaking were also produced. There is no organised collection of either the apples or grapes. Local people do come out at harvest time and fill bags, but much is wasted and left to rot.

Processing & Distribution

Milton Keynes has around thirty food processing companies ranging from small artisan processors such as Woburn County Foods to large global multi-nationals such as Esca who make beef patties for McDonalds and Sensient Flavors who make food flavourings and colourings.

These large companies are well serviced by the transport and communication infrastructure in Milton Keynes. However, there are no cold storage facilities for fruit and vegetables in Buckinghamshire which means that any fresh produce will

be transported further and more often than necessary.¹

There is a small general abattoir in Hanslope and a poultry abattoir in Olney. The poultry abattoir is well used and processes locally reared poultry which is sold at a number of local markets and farm shops.

Issues faced by new enterprises range from availability of suitable premises, to business advice and access to new markets. Small or emerging processors told us they often feel unsure about contacting the Council's Environmental Health department because of perception about complicated legislation. A Milton Keynes resident who is keen to set up a catering enterprise told us "*I bake bread and produce ready-to-eat veggie meals in the form of all sorts of snacks, pies, flans, pâtés, savoury rices etc. My kitchen is completely inadequate for food production. Do you know where I can rent a kitchen for my baking?*"

Retail

A broad survey of the food retail sector within the Borough was carried out using existing data and field surveys.

Milton Keynes has around forty supermarkets including convenience stores, most of which have been taken over by supermarkets. Tesco has 51% of the grocery share.

The combined market share (excluding convenience) of the largest four retailers (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury and Morrisons) rose from 69 per cent in 2004 to 74 per cent in 2005.²

There are a small number of traditional and specialist food retailers mainly located in the older towns on the outer edges of the Borough. Woburn Sands boasts the highest number with a good range including a grocers, butchers, and independent bakers.

However, Heelands, in the centre of the city has managed to retain an established bakery and greengrocer despite the proximity of a supermarket convenience store. This is a unique situation in Milton Keynes, and investigating why this has happened is vital. A recommendation for further research is included in section 5, the **Food MK Action Plan**.

Bletchley and Wolverton are established centres for ethnic food shops including Asian, African and Eastern European. Elsewhere in the city there are a handful of wholesalers selling Chinese and South African food. The city centre market hosts a number of ethnic food stalls.

There are four traditional street markets in Bletchley, Central Milton Keynes, Wolverton and Stony Stratford and four distinct farmers markets: Stony Stratford, Olney, Woburn and Wolverton. Bletchley, Newport Pagnell and New Bradwell have expressed aspirations to hold farmers markets and are actively pursuing this.

Catering & Food Service

Milton Keynes has many cafés, bars, restaurants and take-aways but perhaps not the diversity one would expect from an established city. Most are located in the

1 SEEDA, 2001

2 DEFRA, 2005

city centre area or within the older settlements.

According to the Annual Business Inquiry, 39,297 people in Milton Keynes are employed in the distribution, hotel and food service sector. This is the highest of all the employment categories for Milton Keynes and higher than any other town in the South East region – Brighton and Hove being second highest with 31,600.³ This figure may be artificially high due to the number of distribution businesses based in Milton Keynes, therefore further research is needed to establish the exact nature of this sector, and draw any useful conclusions.

Waste Disposal

Incredibly, 40% of all food purchased in the UK is never eaten.⁴

The levels of waste associated with food are therefore unsurprisingly high.

Milton Keynes has a kerbside recycling service for some plastics, glass, paper and card and is achieving a 31% recycling rate compared to St Edmundsbury in Suffolk, which has the highest rate in the UK at 50.64%.⁵ It does not currently include kitchen waste though the Council are trialling kitchen waste collection in two locations in the city.⁶

According to the Council, 28,000 residents take part in the green garden waste collection. The green waste is composted at a farm in Haversham in the north of the City and used as an agricultural fertiliser.

Waste Watch estimate up to 30% of our household waste could be composted and WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) has distributed over 500,000 compost bins throughout the country. However, no clear figures exist for how many people are actively composting and anecdotally, the drop out rate is high.⁷

On food packaging and reducing waste at source, The National Federation of Women's Institutes are currently leading a campaign to challenge supermarkets to cut down on packaging or face a boycott, though no specific action has been taken by them in Milton Keynes. WRAP are working with retailers and businesses, such as the Co-op, on initiatives for packaging minimisation. Milton Keynes has a high number of Co-op stores so we would expect to see some evidence of this programme soon.⁸

Anglia Oils operates a waste cooking oil collection scheme that covers Milton Keynes. They currently collect from around 150 food businesses in MK. The waste oil is collected and processed into bio diesel fuel.⁹

3 ABI, 2004

4 Observer 2005

5 Milton Keynes Council 2006/Guardian Green Living Guide 2006

6 Milton Keynes Council 2006

7 Waste Online, 2006

8 WRAP, 2006

9 Anglia Oils, 2006

Local Food Producer Surveys

To begin to understand more about the issues facing local producers, we approached fifteen primary producers identified by the database. Seven producers responded and a short survey was carried out with them face-to-face and on the telephone.

The producers who responded to the survey were involved in producing a range of products from baked goods to honey, vegetables, plants, beef, lamb and soft fruit. Fish, caught at Brightlingsea and sold locally, was also included.

All but one producer is involved in a number of farmers markets in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire and for five producers, these markets are their main retail opportunity. One producer supplied a local community café, one had set up his own box scheme, one sold at the farm gate and one sold at livestock markets.

The main barriers to selling more produce locally were identified as:

- Lack of co-ordination of markets
- Lack of proper facilities i.e. covered markets
- Lack of resources and time for promoting their products locally
- The need for their own processing facilities such as cold stores and cutting plants

When asked what kinds of local initiatives might support their businesses, producers identified the following:

- A better public understanding of food issues
- A Milton Keynes Local Food Guide
- A local food branding scheme, such as 'Made in MK' – although support for this was not universal
- More co-ordinated support from statutory organisations – small or emerging processors reported little dedicated business advice and concerns about complicated legislation
- Availability of suitable land and premises for production and processing
- Access to new markets – few producers were making any inroads into supplying mainstream food businesses, and co-ordinated support is needed if this is to 'get off the ground'

All producers identified a better public understanding of food issues as a key to helping them sell more produce locally. Some went on to comment that more direct involvement by the community in promoting and supporting local food was necessary for the sector to grow sustainably.

The honey producer said he was happy with local sales levels and had sold his entire stock last year. The community food growing project identified more skills, access to land, better tools and reliable funding as key issues for the sustainability of their enterprise.

This survey was useful to get a brief picture of some of the issues facing local producers, selling in Milton Keynes. A number of actions taking forward their ideas are included in section 5, the **Food MK Action Plan**. The questionnaire used in the survey is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

Mapping The Community Food Sector

Local Food Pioneers & Community Food Initiatives

Local food pioneers include farmers markets, box schemes, farm shops and community supported agriculture.

Community Supported Agriculture is an international movement linking local communities of consumers with farmers. A CSA typically functions as a group of consumers who pay up front for a share of the farm produce and are involved in its production in a range of ways from deciding what will be grown through to being involved in managing the land in trust for the community. Currently there are no CSA schemes in Milton Keynes. The fourth section of the Food MK work, **An Urban Farm For Milton Keynes** looks at the feasibility of setting one up.

There are currently four farmers markets operating in the Milton Keynes Borough. Stony Stratford, Olney and Woburn are run by the local Town Councils. Wolverton is run by the community enterprise, Food Train. Bletchley, Newport Pagnell and New Bradwell have expressed aspirations to hold farmers markets.

Three large vegetable box schemes deliver to the area – River Nene, Abel and Cole and The Ethical Food Company (who are based in Winslow and sell a range of produce from within a 40 mile radius). Milk deliveries are operated by the large Dairy Crest group and an independent milk round in the north east of the city, G. Adderson Dairy.

There are three farm shops in the Borough. Fullers, in Beachampton, selling mainly organic fruit and vegetables grown in Leicestershire and organic meat produced on the adjoining farm. Thrift Farm is a rural training centre for adults with learning difficulties in the South of the city. Hunters Farm shop is situated in Little Brickhill and sells a range of local and regional produce.

The community food sector includes community cafés, allotments and community gardens and co-operative buying clubs. The way the sector addresses community self-help distinguishes it from charitable food resources which include food banks, soup kitchens, and programmes for food vouchers, though clearly these have a vital role to play. Milton Keynes has one permanent Food Bank which provides people with food in times of personal crisis from a collection point in Bradwell Common. There are also a number of programmes mainly within faith communities which address emergency hunger needs.

Full details of the community food sector are included in Appendix 2 of this report but in brief the sector in Milton Keynes comprises:

- A number of community cafés such as Eating Point in Stantonbury
- Community gardens such as Bletchley Community Orchard
- Community based horticultural training and therapy such as Foundation Food
- A number of informal co-operative buying clubs such as The Woolies – a group of friends who order in bulk from a wholefoods supplier
- Community markets such as the Country Markets and the farmers market in Wolverton

- School vegetable plots, breakfast clubs and healthy school food schemes
- Allotments and home produce

Community Cafés

Community cafés are mostly run by volunteers and often provide a meeting place within the local community where people can access healthy, affordable food. The Eating Point at Stantonbury Campus is a vegetarian café run by Milton Keynes Christian Foundation. It largely provides healthy food to students and staff working on the Campus, but is open to anyone. The café is supplied with vegetables and fruit from the Foundation Allotment in Wolverton, and as such is one of the few examples of local food chain connection to be found in Milton Keynes.

Community Gardens

Bletchley Community Orchard is a new project led by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council which supported the local community to create a fruit orchard on a piece of surplus allotment land. Other community gardens may not have been created primarily for food production purposes, but often have an element of 'edible' planting included in the overall scheme. In section 3, the **Eat the City** report we look in more detail at the opportunities afforded by such gardens and landscaping to contribute to a local food system.

Community Based Horticultural Training & Therapy

Foundation Food is a programme run by Milton Keynes Christian Foundation which provides placements to young people who are disengaged with mainstream education. The trainees are supported to grow fruit, flowers and vegetables on an allotment site in Wolverton. The surplus produce is sold at Wolverton farmers market and supplied to the Eating Point café. The scheme has recently seen two trainees go on to embark on full time horticulture courses at Moulton College.

Community Markets

Two Country Markets (formerly W.I Markets) operate in Wolverton and Olney. They provide a flexible way for small and hobby producers to realise a small income from their produce. There is no requirement for sellers to specifically use local ingredients, but many do. Their key concern is the need to encourage a new generation of young people to get involved in growing, cooking and crafting.

Co-operative Buying Clubs

Buying clubs are often informal groupings of friends and neighbours who get together to order bulk whole foods from suppliers such as Suma or Infinity foods. This can make sense particularly for everyday household items and can make purchasing organic food more affordable. Groups are generally administered by volunteers and are often reluctant to advertise for new members due to their voluntary nature and lack of storage space.

School Vegetable Plots/Breakfast Clubs/Healthy School Food

A number of schools in Milton Keynes have vegetable plots on site and some,

such as Wyvern First School in Wolverton, are engaged with local allotment growers who voluntarily support classes to take part in gardening an allotment plot.

There are at least fourteen breakfast clubs in MK schools. Schools are supported by the Healthy Schools programme via the PCT and MK Council to work towards the Government's new school food standards of getting more fruit and vegetables, oily fish, bread, water and healthy drinks on the menu.

Allotments

Allotments have their roots in the early enclosures of England's common fields. Today, the word is used to describe a parcel of land let to an individual on which fruit and vegetable crops are grown for personal consumption.

There are approximately 2,500 plots in Milton Keynes but no clear figures for their occupancy. This figure is a reasonably healthy one for a city the size of Milton Keynes, however, anecdotal evidence shows demand is high with waiting lists in many areas but no plans to create additional sites. Some allotment sites are under-utilised, usually because promotion is poor or they are located too far away from where people live.

Allotments may be privately owned and administered, owned by trustees or associations or by local authorities. District or unitary authorities cannot provide allotments in areas where there is a parish council or parish meeting.¹

In line with this, MK Council is pursuing transfer of ownership to the parishes by March 2007. It will continue to offer a management service for sites. It is currently unclear both how many parishes will wish to directly manage their allotments and what support is being offered to them to enable them to make that decision.

Some sites, such as ones in New Bradwell, Woburn Sands and Stony Stratford, are owned by independent trusts and managed independently or under a service agreement with the local authority. There are a number of allotment societies and associations operating in Milton Keynes and their details are included in Appendix 2. However, there is no overall body supporting and promoting allotments in Milton Keynes. This lack of targeted support means that allotment tenant's voices are not being heard and the potential for co-ordinated promotion and opportunities for encouraging healthy lifestyles are being missed. It is not within the scope of this report to detail the many benefits of allotment gardening, but it is worth pointing out that allotments encourage a self-help culture in the community, helping local people take decisions for themselves and come together to care for each other. This culture of enterprise forms the foundation for sustainable communities.

In terms of the contribution Allotments might make to a mainstream local food economy, law relating to the sale of surplus produce remains desperately vague despite numerous attempts to clarify it. Sale of surplus produce is permitted but as to how each Parish determines this varies widely. In 1998, a report by the Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs entitled *The Future of Allotments* made a recommendation that restrictions on commercial use and sale of surplus should be repealed and urged the Government to produce a

1 Clayden, 2002

Green Paper to update and enhance allotment legislation.²

According to the Department of Communities and Local Government, the English Allotment Survey is due to be published in late 2006 though early indications are that this will not necessarily force a rethink of the law.³

Allotment sites are planned for the Milton Keynes expansion areas, but only at the rate of current local plan leisure and recreation standards which is around 20 plots per 1000 population. Legislation requiring town planners to account for future demand was removed from a revision of the 1925 Allotment Act in 1993.

The National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardeners say that these standards are nowhere near the levels that are now required in some areas or will be in the future, suggesting that figures from the 2006 survey mentioned above be used to set new standards and that local authorities at parish and district level be encouraged to take a pro-active stance on creating local frameworks of support for allotment gardens.⁴

Actions around this, for instance preserving and promoting underused sites and using new allotment sites as an opportunity for arrivals work with new communities, are set out in section 5, the **Food MK Action Plan**.

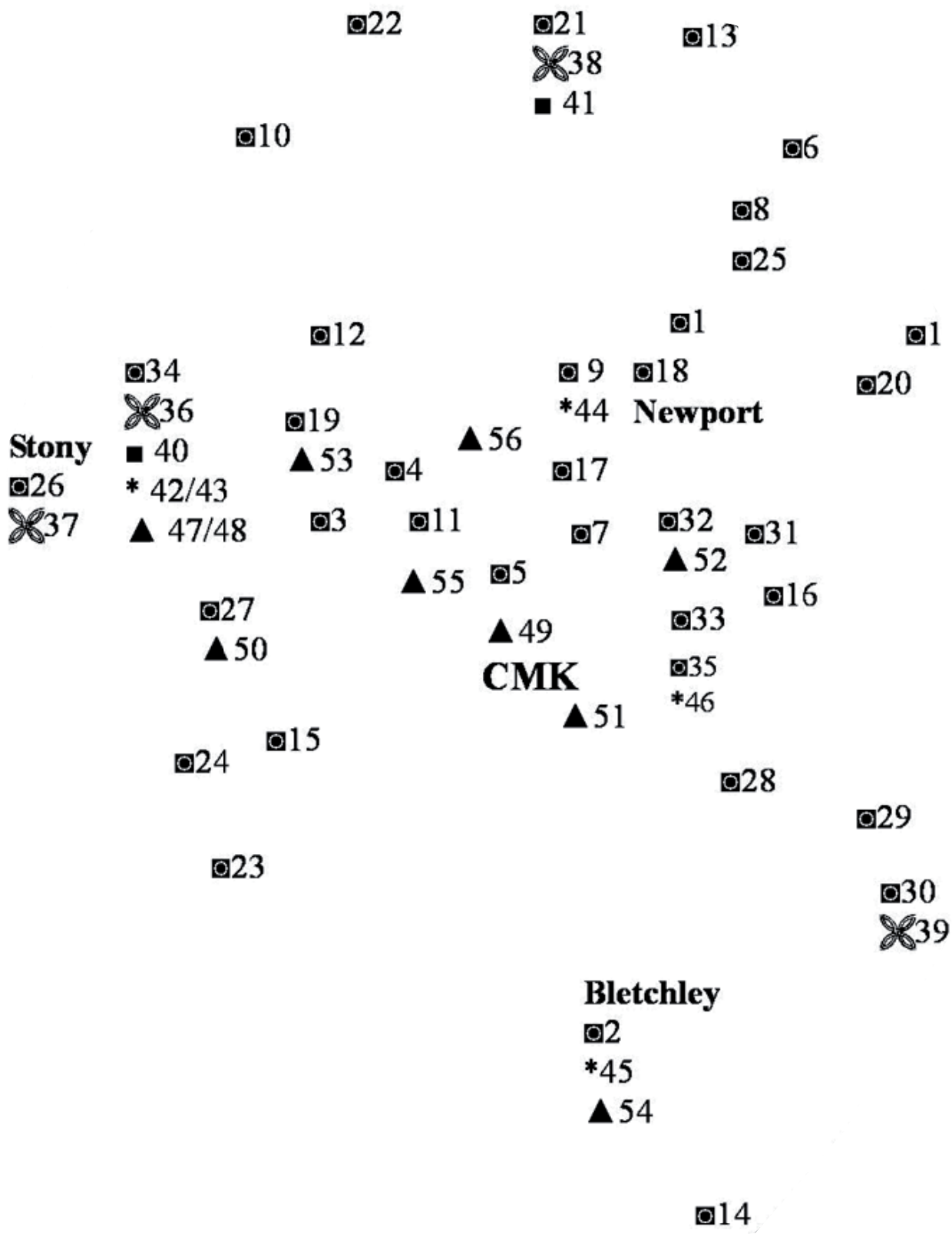
The following map shows the location of allotment sites throughout the city. It presents a startling picture of a dearth of sites in and around the South Central area of the city; Fishermead, Netherfield, Beanhill, Eaglestone and Oldbrook. It is unclear why this is, particularly when these areas are low density and support large amounts of green space. In order to explore this issue further, two actions around assessing the urban land capacity for food production and in engaging communities to think about food growing as an active use of their green space, are included in the **Food MK Action Plan**.

Section 3, the **Eat The City** report looks at a number of UK based projects that take place on allotment sites. It also looks at the contribution these community food initiatives make to the level of local food production.

2 DETR, 1998

3 DCLG, 2006

4 NSALG, 2006



Map of Community Food Initiatives and Allotments in Milton Keynes

Full contact details for all the allotment groups and community food projects are included in Appendix 2 to this report

Allotments (some locations have more than one site)	
1 Astwood and Hardmead	19 New Bradwell
2 Bletchley	20 North Crawley
3 Bradwell	21 Olney
4 Bradville	22 Ravenstone
5 Conniburrow	23 Shenley Brook End
6 Clifton Reynes	24 Shenley Church End
7 Downs Barn	25 Sherington
8 Emberton	26 Stony Stratford
9 Great Linford	27 Two Mile Ash
10 Hanslope	28 Walnut Tree
11 Heelands	29 Wavendon
12 Haversham	30 Woburn Sands
13 Lavendon	31 Willen
14 Little Brickhill	32 Willen Park
15 Loughton	33 Woolstone
16 MK Village	34 Wolverton
17 Neath Hill	35 Woughton
18 Newport Pagnell	
Farmers Markets	
36 Wolverton Farmers Market	
37 Stony Stratford Farmers Market	
38 Olney Farmers Market	
39 Woburn Farmers Market	
Country Markets	
40 Wolverton Country Market	
41 Olney Country Market	
Community Gardens & Orchards	
42 Wolverton Community Orchard	
43 The Secret Garden	
44 Great Linford Community Garden	
45 Bletchley Community Orchard	
46 Woughton Community Orchard	
Food Growing, Retail & Community Cafes	
47 Foundation Food	
48 MK Museum	
49 Sust!	
50 Macintyre Cafe	
51 Food Corner Cafe	
52 Camphill Cafe	
53 New Bradwell Community Cafe	
54 YPOS @ Fenny	
55 MK Foodbank	
56 Eating Point Community Cafe	

Reviewing Consumer Attitudes To Local Food

The next stage of the Foodcheck process involved taking a snap-shot of consumer attitudes to local food in Milton Keynes.

Food From Britain claim that the percentage of shoppers buying local food increased by 6% in 2005 with almost 65% buying local food and a further 9% expressing an interest in buying if availability was better.¹

But is this reflected in Milton Keynes?

Clearly a comprehensive consumer survey throughout Milton Keynes was beyond the scope of this commission, so we decided to concentrate on gaining some qualitative information about consumer attitudes to local food.

We were concerned that discussing people's individual food choices could potentially be a sensitive and emotive issue, so we created a participatory method whereby people could talk about what their 'food life' was like, without being asked any direct questions.

A series of cartoons were created around the themes of buying, cooking, eating and disposing food and participants asked to share their thoughts on how each image made them feel.

We carried out this exercise at a number of different community events across Milton Keynes and gathered some interesting responses, which have helped us draw a number of conclusions about people's food aspirations.

The following comments are representative of people's experience of **buying food** in Milton Keynes:

"Organic and fair-trade food is expensive"

"Food is too cheap – people expect to pay too little"

"How/where can we buy food with less packaging? How can we influence supermarkets to change?"

"We need a grocer's shop and they should have a big garden to grow their stock"

"No time for own allotment but would buy locally grown veg".

People's experience of **cooking food** can be summed up by the following quotes:

"I would like to have more time to cook nice meals"

"We must teach our children how to cook properly using fresh food".

On **eating food**, some funny and poignant comments were received, reinforcing the connection that is clearly there between food and our emotional and social lives:

"I'd like to eat out more but struggle to find anywhere to go"

1 Food from Britain, 2005

“It’s important to sit round the table as a family so we can talk about our day and our food”

“Food is fuel”.

The question of **how food waste is disposed** of resulted in a significant number of responses including:

“Waste disposal MK should have a special collection for food waste”

“My black bin bags are full of packaging”

“I have a composter but I don’t know if it is working and I don’t know where to ask for advice”.

Overall, this method of assessing consumer attitudes to food and local food was useful in that it showed people have got strong views about food and do want to see improvements not only to the quality and safety of our food but also to a culture which places importance on food and taking the time to shop, cook and eat it.

Given more time, we would have liked to extend the number of places that we carried out the exercise and done further work with children to assess their attitudes to food. Once again, the need for further work is clear, and included in section 5, the **Food MK Action Plan**.

Reviewing Support Available To The Local Food Sector

The final part of the Foodcheck process involved considering the support available in the Milton Keynes Borough for food businesses, in particular those considering starting local food enterprises or community food initiatives.

There are three main strands of support in Milton Keynes:

- The Buckinghamshire & MK, Berkshire and Oxfordshire (BBO) Food Group works as a federation of the three food groups to support local food producers and promote food awareness.
- Business Link and allied organisations - often directly targeting larger rural businesses and advising on farm diversification
- Community/voluntary sector support – in its infancy and as yet uncoordinated but seeking to develop community food initiatives and food growing projects run by and for the community.

BBO Food Group

The BBO Food Group was set up in 2004 with the aim of encouraging people in the three counties to buy their food locally, and to set up links between those wishing to source and serve local food, and those that can provide it. Membership of the group is growing all the time, and represents a wide range of producers, from Slough in the south, to Olney in the north.

The BBO group publishes an annual Food Guide which features local producers in the area. Unfortunately the coverage of local producers is sparse with only five producers in the MK Borough featured.

Mainstream Support

Business Link Rural Business Enterprise Project – MK, Oxfordshire & Bucks

Funded by SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) and the European Social Fund, Business Link supports rural businesses to develop networks and identify training needs. It has run workshops on farm diversification and the planning system, funding opportunities and project planning. Meetings take place in the South Oxfordshire area.

Berks, Bucks and Oxon Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

FWAG help farmers and landowners maintain the delicate balance between efficient farming and protecting wildlife. Advice is given on all aspects of conserving the landscape and improving the interaction of modern farming with wildlife. Initial visit is free and FWAG is able to undertake Environmental Stewardship Applications. The group is ongoing.

Farm Business Advice Service

Farm Business Advice Service provides free advice to farmers to help them to understand the impacts of the Single Payment Scheme on their businesses and to

help them adapt in order to ensure a secure farming future. The scheme runs until March 2007.

Trading Standards

Milton Keynes Trading Standards have a role in both animal health and welfare and in marketing and certification. They have an enforcement role in laws which are designed to prevent, control and eradicate animal disease on farms and ensure the welfare of animals in transit.

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health department at Milton Keynes Council exists to make sure all food businesses are registered and butchers are licensed. It makes sure food is correctly labelled and described and meets quality standards and it inspects manufacturers, retailers, restaurants and other food premises to ensure strict hygiene standards are met. It also involves itself in a range of other animal welfare and food standards issues.

DEFRA Rural Development Service

The Rural Development Service in the South East promotes and manages schemes providing grant support for land management; Environmental Stewardship (ES), Countryside Stewardship (CSS) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), rural business and rural communities (Project Based Schemes (PBS).

Additionally, Lantra is the sector skills council for the environment and land based sector and there are a number of training and advice organisations working in the Borough such as RBAT (Rural Business Advice and Training) and ADER (Agricultural Development in the Eastern Region).

Contact details for these organisations are listed in the Food MK Contacts section in Appendix 3 to this report.

Community & Voluntary Sector Support

As already indicated there is no formal organisation promoting or supporting local food initiatives in Milton Keynes.

However, as always happens, there are informal networks of support with projects such as Foundation Food and Food Train offering informal, consultancy support to a range of organisations who are considering starting or who have already begun working on community food initiatives.

For instance, Food Train has been offering support to the Young Persons Out of School Project (YPOS) who have an allotment which they are trying to develop for the benefit of the young people who attend their scheme. Food Train have also made the connection between YPOS and Foundation Food who are beginning to share ideas and information.

Many schools in Milton Keynes are working on food growing projects via the Healthy Schools Programme, and the Healthy Schools Co-ordinators at both Milton Keynes Council and the Primary Care Trust also have knowledge of a range of experience and ideas about school-based projects which are often

informally shared between schools in the Borough.

The absence of an over-arching organisation or network offering support to community food initiatives is a 'missing link' in the support and development of local food in Milton Keynes, and is an issue we explored in more detail through the Foodcheck workshop.

Conclusion & Action Planning

As already mentioned, local food issues are currently 'dealt with' by the Bucks & MK, Berks and Oxon Food Group. The relevance of this group to the Milton Keynes situation and our continued involvement in it is something which we sought to discuss through a Local Food Workshop, which concluded the Foodcheck process.

Invitations to the workshop were sent to local producers, Parish and Town Councils, community and voluntary sector organisations, as well as Milton Keynes Council, the PCT and English Partnerships.

The participants represented a range of organisations from The Ethical Food Company, The Global Centre, MK Organic Gardeners Group and Country Markets (formerly the Women's Institute).

A range of participatory techniques were used to draw out ideas about the issues, obstacles and opportunities facing the development of a more sustainable local food system in Milton Keynes and the following issues, obstacles, opportunities and actions were identified by the participants:

Issues

- Availability and affordability of fresh food
- Culture – we don't cook from raw ingredients anymore
- Lack of information about where food comes from
- Power of the supermarkets
- Acceptance of industrial food
- Desire to eat out of season

Obstacles

- Access to local food
- Lack of local producers, principally fruit and vegetable growers
- Long working days for everyone make cooking hard
- Cheap oil equals cheap food imports

Opportunities

- Focus on schools and make children the agents of change
- Local food equals less packaging therefore helping to meet waste reduction targets
- Designate allotments as local food production zones and support collective endeavour

The following opportunities for action were developed by the workshop participants:

Food Culture

- Campaign to communicate local food is 'more than organic'
- Hold good food demonstrations at local events
- Write articles and adverts for local newsletters

- Hold food fun classes

Education & Learning

- Every school should have a vegetable patch
- Create a marketing campaign for local food based on educating
- Make school food work relate to the whole community by linking with community groups and allotments
- Create a role for paid grower to support school food growing

Allotments & Other Spaces To Grow Food On

- Challenge allotment conservatism and have an open debate on what allotments are for
- Support the enterprise of allotment growers
- Create an umbrella group for allotments in MK
- Acknowledge the role of allotments as private and peaceful growing spaces and look at other ways of creating community growing space

Access To Food & Health

- Properly and strategically collect information about food
- Create community cafés as outlets for local produce
- Convince small retailers to stock local produce
- Support local food co-operatives to improve access to healthy food

Economy & Enterprise

- Carry out a feasibility around loyalty/points card for local food
- Prove the local economic benefit
- Stimulate agency led economic development
- Create a food strategy for MK

The Foodcheck has been a valuable tool in beginning to think about the local food system in Milton Keynes.

The issues raised by local food producers and community food projects, together with information gathered by the Foodcheck process, interviews with key organisations and observations of good practice elsewhere in the country have led us to conclude that there are a number of key obstacles and challenges affecting the development of the local food economy in Milton Keynes.

These obstacles and challenges can be grouped under the following themes:

- Local governance
- Research and policy work
- Education, promotion and marketing of local food
- Development of the local food economy

These themes are expanded on within the conclusions of section 1, **Growing Food For A Growing City** and actions for meeting the challenges are explored in section 5, the **Food MK Action Plan**.

References

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15. Clayden, P. - The Law of Allotments, 5th Edition, Shaw and Sons, 2002
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18. NSALG - Personal communication with Secretary Geoff Stokes, 2006
19. Food from Britain - IGD Retail and Food Service opportunities for local food, 2005

Appendix 1

Market Towns Foodcheck

Primary Producer Questionnaire

The basis of this research is an economic evaluation. No names or business details are required, so the survey will be completely anonymous and untraceable. We are happy to provide information about the work we are doing to support local food in Milton Keynes and you will be welcome to contact us.

1. Please briefly describe the nature of your business

2. Approximately, what is the annual income generated from products in the following categories?

Cereals intended for human consumption	
Milk	
Yogurt	
Cheese	
Eggs	
Other dairy	
Pork	
Poultry	
Lamb	
Beef	
Other meats	
Salad vegetables	
Root vegetables	
Brassicas	
Soft fruit	
Top fruit	
Other	

3. In which category is the annual turnover of your business? (Please circle)

<£50k	£50k-£100k	£100k-£150k	£150k-£200k
£200k-£250k	£250k-£500k	£500k-£1m	>£1m

4. Are you already involved in any initiatives targeting local consumers?

Yes/No

If yes, please briefly describe:

If no, would you consider/ are you considering selling your produce locally?

Yes/No

5. Which of the following barriers do/would you face when selling your produce locally?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Finding local markets | Yes/No |
| Not enough income from local markets | Yes/No |
| Ability to supply regularly | Yes/No |
| Lack of resources | Yes/No |
| Lack of skills | Yes/No |
| Other, please specify | |

6. Would you consider or are you already a subscriber to any of the following initiatives to help sell your produce?

	Are	Consider	Not
Published lists of local food suppliers			
Local promotion to consumers			
Local food wholesale e.g. local food depot			
Local food distribution network			
Co-operative/collaborative marketing scheme			
Internet marketing scheme			
A local branding scheme			

7. What is the single most important factor that will help you sell more produce locally?

Appendix 2

Allotment Associations & Societies In Milton Keynes

London Road Allotment Gardeners Association

Allotments at London Rd, Stony Stratford (approx 111 plots) Land owned by Ancell Trust

Secretary, Joan Mehrtens

Tel: 01908 569450

Great Linford Parish Allotment Association

Allotments at Gt Linford, Neath Hill and Willen Park (approx 100)

c/o Gt Linford Parish Council, 10 Tower Crescent, Neath Hill Local Centre, Neath Hill, MK15 6JY

Tel: 01908 606613

Email: gtlinfordparish@btconnect.com

Two Mile Ash Allotments Association

Allotments at Stone Hill (approx 43 plots) owned by Bradwell Abbey Parish Council

C Gossop, 15 Stonehill, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes, MK8 8DN

Tel: 01908 561365

Heelands Allotments Association

Allotments at Glovers Lane (approx 20 plots)

Elizabeth Parsons, 66 Stokenchurch Place, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes, MK13 8BY

Tel: 07887 578662

Email: liz_parsons@tiscali.co.uk

Woburn Sands Allotment Association

Allotments on Bow Brickhill Rd (approx 100 plots) Private site owned by trust.

Ralph Purcell, 8 Wood St, Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes, MK17 9PJ

Tel: 01908 583592

Crownhill Allotments

Off Cruickshank Grove (approx 28 plots) Owned and managed by Shenley Church End Parish Council

Site Rep: John Helm contact via SCEPC

Tel: 01908 561938

Windmill Hill Garden and Allotment Association

Allotments Off Rose Mullion Avenue Tattenhoe (approx 100)

Runs 'The Hut' on site for allotment and others off site – has 400 members.
Sundays only 10-12 Mid Jan – July onwards Sat and Suns. Just celebrated its 30th anniversary.

Secretary, Roger Wyatt, 23 Church Green Rd, Bletchley, MK3 6BJ

Tel: 01908 643479

Haversham Allotments

Off Brookfield Rd (approx 50 plots) owned and managed by Haversham cum Little Linford Parish Council

Terry Sythes, 9 Rowan Drive, Haversham, Milton Keynes, MK19 7AH

Tel: 01908 315026

Stoke Road Allotment Association

Allotments at Stoke Road, Bletchley (approx 50 plots)

Mrs B Westmorland, 46 Kinloch Place, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 3NN

Tel: 01908 648831

Broughton & MK Allotment Holders Committee

Allotments off Broughton Rd and Walton Rd, owned and managed by the parish council.

Peter Johnson

Tel: 01908 559819

Email: clerk@broughtonandmkv-pc.gov.uk

Campbell Park Parish Council

Allotments off Dolbin Court, Willen and Newport Rd, Woolstone

Parish Clerk, Fishermead House, 1 Pencarrow Place, Fishermead, Milton Keynes, MK6 2AT

Tel: 01908 608559

The Patch Allotment

Allotments Off Newport Rd, Woughton on the Green (approx 240 plots)

Contact for Community Plots: 01908 230346

Farmers Markets In Milton Keynes

Wolverton Farmers Market

First and third Saturday of the month outside the Town Hall on the corner of Creed St and Stratford Rd from 9am-1pm

Alissa Pemberton, 5 Buckingham St, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5JA

Tel: 01908 221161

Email: foodtrain@fsmail.net

Web: www.foodtrain.typepad.com/weblog

Stony Stratford Farmers Market

Fourth Friday of the month in the Market Square from 9am-3pm

Charles Brindley, Stony Stratford Town Council, Library Building

Tel: 01908 566726

E-mail: office@stonystratford.gov.uk

Olney Farmers Market

First Sunday of the month in the Market Square from 10-2pm

Pat Slaney, Olney Town Council, The Olney Centre, High Street, Olney, MK46 4EF

Tel: 01234 711679

Email: pat.slaney@olneytowncouncil.co.uk

Woburn Farmers Market

Third Sunday of the month in the town centre from 11-3pm

Woburn Traders Association

Tel: 01525 290950

Country Markets

Wolverton & Olney Country Markets (formerly Women's Institute)

The market at Wolverton takes place every Friday from 8am-12noon at the Bath House Community Centre on Stratford Rd and at Olney every Thursday in the Market Square from 7.30am-12.30pm

Tel: 01246 261508

Community Gardens and Orchards

Wolverton Community Orchard & School Allotments

Behind Western Rd & Furze Way, Wolverton, Milton Keynes

Denise Ilett, 91 Anson Rd, Wolverton, Milton Keynes

Tel: 01908 316749

Email: dilett@btinternet.com

The Secret Garden

Off Stratford Rd, Wolverton, Milton Keynes

Roger Kitchen, 3 Stacey Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes

Tel: 01908 315314

Email: roger@kitchens-ink.fsnet.co.uk

Great Linford Community Garden

c/o Gt Linford Parish Council, 10 Tower Crescent, Neath Hill Local Centre,
Neath Hill, MK15 6JY

Tel: 01908 606613

Email: gtlinfordparish@btconnect.com

Bletchley Community Orchard

Lisa Courtney, Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council

62 Queensway, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2SA

Tel: 01908 649469

Email: townclerk@bletchleyandfennystratford.co.uk

Woughton Community Orchard

Woughton-on-the-Green

The Parks Trust, Campbell Park Pavilion, 1300 Silbury Boulevard, Milton Keynes,
MK9 4AD

Tel: 01908 233600

Email: info@theparkstrust.com

Food Growing Projects, Retail and Community Cafés

Foundation Food

A range of food activities including allotment growing project, training for young people, a community café and a catering service. Eating Point is on Stantonbury Campus and is open 12-2pm Mon-Fri, term time only.

Judy Hildreth, MK Christian Foundation, The Square, Wolverton, Milton Keynes,
MK12 5HX

Tel: 01908 311112

Email: judy@mkchristianfoundation.co.uk

Web: www.mkchristianfoundation.co.uk

MK Museum Kitchen Garden and Granary Café

The museum follows the history of the Milton Keynes area, including North Buckinghamshire and South Northamptonshire, from 1800 to the present day. Open Saturday & Sunday each week, 11am to 4.30pm.

The Granary Tea Room serves a range of hot and cold home-made refreshments. Visitors can also purchase a range of home made jams and preserves, many of

which are made using produce grown in the Museum Kitchen Garden.

McConnell Drive, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5EL

Tel: 01908 316222

Email: info@mkmuseum.org.uk

Sust!

Fair Trade and ethical produce shop in the City centre run by the Global Centre Ltd. Open Mon-Sat 10am-5:30pm and Sunday 11:30am-4:30pm

Unit 15, The Food Centre, 407 Secklow Gate, Milton Keynes, MK9 3NE

Tel: 01908 232255

Email: sust@phonecoop.coop

MacIntyre Coffee Shop in Stony Stratford & Great Holm

The coffee shops are learning centres for service users. Service users can work towards NVQ Level 1 in Hospitality and Catering..

602 South Seventh Street , Central Milton Keynes , MK9 2JA

Tel: 01908 230100

The Food Corner Café

The café serves fresh homemade food and fair trade products in the heart of the City centre and also offers a take away service. Open Mondays to Fridays, 9.30am to 3.30pm and Saturdays, 10.30am to 3.30pm

Church of Christ the Cornerstone, 300 Saxon Gate West, Milton Keynes, MK9 2ES

Tel: 01908 237777

Email: information@cornerstonemk.org.uk

Camphill Milton Keynes

A supported living scheme which runs a food processing unit and vegetable garden which supplies their café. Open 10.30-4.30 Monday –Friday

Japonica Lane, Willen Park South, Milton Keynes, MK15 9JY

Tel: 01908 235000

Email: office@camphill-miltonkeynes.co.uk

Web: <http://www.camphill.org.uk/guide/index/guide/milton/milton.htm>

New Bradwell Community Café

Tea, coffee, cakes, biscuits and the library bus. Open Tuesdays 2.30pm – 4.30pm.

New Bradwell Community Centre, Church St, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, MK13 0BQ

Contact: Pru Errington

Tel: 01908 310730

YPOS@Fenny

Young People's Allotment Project in development.

YPOS @ Fenny, Queensway, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2HB

Contact: Liz Richardson

Tel: 01908 370795

Email: Staffemail@YPOS.milton-keynes.sch.uk

MK Food Bank

The Food Bank provides people with the essentials at a time when they need them most, covering the time it takes before other parts of the social care infrastructure can come into play.

Into the Community, The Food Bank, MK Christian Centre, Strudwick Drive, Oldbrook, Milton Keynes, MK6 2TG

Tel: 01908 670655

Email: info@mkfoodbank.org.uk

Clubs and Societies

West Bletchley Garden Club

Informal social club for exchanging news and ideas. Sale of spare plants and talks by experts. Meets second Tuesday of month, 7.30pm at Rectory Cottages, Church Green Rd.

Contact: Ray Jones, 15 Bedford St, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2TX

Open University Gardening Club

Meets monthly at the Open University for a range of talks and activities. Plants sales.

Contact: Shelagh Coleman

Tel: 01908 655889

Email: s.m.coleman@open.ac.uk

Milton Keynes Organic Gardening Group

The group meets monthly and visits members gardens and allotments all over MK. Shares information, advice and social gatherings.

Contact: Peter Richardson

Tel: 0845 458 2658

Email: peter@ethicalinternet.co.uk

Appendix 3

Food MK Contact List

The Parks Trust

Campbell Park Pavilion

1300 Silbury Boulevard

Milton Keynes

MK9 4AD

Tel: 01908 233600

Email: m.street@theparkstrust.com

Web: www.theparkstrust.com

Milton Keynes Christian Foundation (Foundation Food)

Foundation House

The Square

Wolverton

Milton Keynes

MK12 5HX

Tel: 01908 311112

Email: stephen@mkchristianfoundation.co.uk

Web: www.mkchristianfoundation.co.uk

MKCVO (Milton Keynes Council of Voluntary Organisations)

Acorn House

351 Midsummer Boulevard

Central Milton Keynes

Tel: 01908 661623

Email: clarewalton@mkcvo.co.uk Web:

www.mkcvo.co.uk

Milton Keynes Council

Civic Offices

1 Saxon Gate East

Central Milton Keynes

MK9 3HH

Tel: 01908 691691

Web: www.mkweb.co.uk

Natural England

Policy (Planning, Transport & Local Government)

c/o Thames Gateway Delivery Unit

10th floor

2 Exchange Tower

Harbour Exchange Square

London E14 9GE

Tel: 020 7944 2156

Email: sally.harries@naturalengland.org.uk

Web: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Berkshire Buckinghamshire & Oxon Food Group

Nancy Pound

Economic Development Officer

Buckinghamshire County Council

County Hall

Walton Street

Aylesbury

Buckinghamshire

HP20 1UA

Tel: 01296 383345

Email: npound@buckscc.gov.uk

Web: www.buckscc.gov.uk

Business Link Rural Enterprise Project

Wendy Tidsley

Rural Diversification Advisor

Tel: 07718 031407

Email: wendytidsley@businesslinksolutions.co.uk

Web: www.businesslinksolutions.co.uk

Berks, Bucks and Oxon Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

Unit 11 Blenheim Office Park

Long Hanborough

Witney

Oxfordshire

OX29 8LN

Tel: 01993 886565

Email: bbo@fwag.org.uk

Web: www.fwag.org.uk

Farm Business Advice Service

Tel: 0845 365 1257

Web: www.farmbusinessadvice.co.uk

Milton Keynes Trading Standards

Milton Keynes Council

PO Box 105

Civic Offices

1 Saxon Gate East

Central Milton Keynes

MK9 3HH

Tel: 01908 252504

Email: tsd@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Web: www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/milton-keynes

Milton Keynes Environmental Health

Environment Directorate

Milton Keynes Council

PO Box 105

Civic Offices

1 Saxon Gate East

Central Milton Keynes

MK9 3HH

Tel: 01908 252398

Email: envservices@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Web: www.mkweb.co.uk/environmental-health

Rural Development Service

Alistair Helliwell

Tel: 01296 748352

Mobile: 07774 629152

Email: Alistair.helliwell@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Lantra

John Godden

Employer Engagement Manager

Tel: 01233 610438

Mobile: 07867 908197

Email: john.godden@lantra.co.uk

RBAT (Rural Business Advice & Training)

Adam Vernon

Project Manager

Tel: 07740 492962

Email: avernon@sparsholt.ac.uk

ADER (Agricultural Development in the Eastern Region)

Anthony Goggin

County Officer for Bedfordshire

Based out of Shuttleworth College

Biggleswade

Bedfordshire

SG18 9EA

Tel: 01767 627596

Mobile: 07932 178480

Email: Beds@ader.org.uk

NSALG (National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners)

O'Dell House

Hunters Road

Corby

Northants

NN17 5JE

Tel: 01536 266576

Email: natsoc@nsalg.demon.co.uk

Web: www.nsalg.co.uk

FCFCG (Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens)

The GreenHouse

Hereford St

Bristol

BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

Email: admin@farmgarden.org.uk

Web: www.farmgarden.org.uk

WEN (Women's Environmental Network)

PO Box 30626 London E1 1TZ

Tel: 020 7481 9004

Email: info@wen.org.uk

Web: www.wen.org.uk

Garden Organic (Organic Food for All)

Garden Organic Ryton

Coventry

Warwickshire

CV8 3LG

Tel: 0845 064 1164 or 024 7630 8209

Email: organicfoodforall@hdra.org.uk

Web: www.gardenorganic.org.uk

CCN (Community Composting Network)

67 Alexandra Road

Sheffield

S2 3EE

Tel: 0114 258 0483 or 0114 255 3720

Email: info@communitycompost.org

Web: www.communitycompost.org