



OPEN FOOD
NETWORK UK

Voices of the community

**The Open Food Network UK:
In our own words**





The Open Food Network is a community and software backbone for food systems across the UK working for food sovereignty. Our network of community-driven food enterprises put people and planet first. We build the software, tools and peer learning community so they can focus on building food systems that work.

All the food enterprises we work with have a vision of a better food system and a mission to create it locally.

“ My favourite thing was seeing my kids faces when they seen the size of the apples and bananas. ”

~Phillipa, Tamar Valley

“ It was great that it told you where it was grown or produced ”

~Thomas, Plymouth



“ The In My Back Yard local food cooperative is a brilliant idea – delivering locally-produced, delicious food, direct from the farms to your door each week.

Exactly the local activism I believe in. ”

~Sir Tim Smit, Founder of the Eden Project



“ For my family, Friday means that it's time to collect our order from In My Back Yard! In My Back Yard is a local network of small-scale independent food producers and wholefood suppliers, which provide the community with some super tasty food!

The produce is local (so fewer greenhouse gas emissions as a result of transport), organic (so great for our soil and biodiversity), and mostly in paper packaging, or none at all (so reducing plastic pollution)! What's not to love!

In my opinion, schemes like this are the way forward, and eating in-season local produce is for sure one of the most sustainable ways to eat! ”

~Emily, East Devon

“ Because the focus of the company is more ethical than any previous employers I've worked for I feel that staff are respected and appreciated as part of this overall ideology. ”

~Locavore staff member



What our hubs and producers say about themselves

“ We grow healthy, nutritious fruit and vegetables to the highest ethical standards. No pesticides, no herbicides – just good, fresh food. We work with other local producers and provide good jobs that contribute to the community and the local economy. People are at the heart of what we do. We want to be a hub around which people connect, make memories and develop friendships. We are committed to preserving habitat in our growing spaces for the wonderful species that call Wales their home. ”

~Banc Organics

“ Our aim is to grow produce that benefits us, our wildlife the soil and our community. We grow using minimum tillage.

Our food is for our community and all our produce is eaten within a 30 mile radius of the farm. ”

~Down Farm

“ Cultivate is a co-operative, set up nine years ago and funded by the people of Oxford, to supply the city with local, ethical food. We prioritise organic, low waste and low use of plastic, and source food that has a low carbon footprint. We support community enterprises wherever we can. We're glad to be giving our excellent excess veg to Oxford's food banks via the great Mutual Aid community network. ”

~Cultivate Oxford

“ We are committed to procuring fish and shellfish that have been caught with as little damage to the marine environment as possible, have contributed to the livelihood of small-scale fishers and their communities, and to get these high quality and delicious fish to your door. ”

~Sole of Discretion



“ Our vision is that the Tamar Valley becomes, once again, an area well known for the range and quality of local produce, including food and cut flowers, which has been grown sustainably and is affordable to all who live in the area. Also, that the Tamar Valley is able to support local producers to earn a good living whilst helping to achieve this vision. ”

~Tamar Valley Food Hub

“ Instead of food profits going to big corporations and their shareholders we want your food spending to work harder for society. That means investing in local growers, paying fair wages (we're a living wage employer) and developing other initiatives which help build a fairer and more sustainable society. ”

~Locavore Glasgow



“ We are a community enterprise that brings people in Kent some of the best food choices one can make. We bring all of it into local online markets where you can buy what you need at reasonable prices from traders that have your, Kent’s and the planets wellbeing at heart.

We want to see people from Kent buying the best local products that exist without hassle. Whatever Kent does not produce, should come from people that champion humans’ and the planet’s health; so that future generations can experience Kent’s beauty for centuries to come. ”

~Kent Food Hubs



“ Bowhouse replaces a missing link in the local food chain. It connects small growers and producers with restaurants and shoppers, giving everyone better access to the best ingredients and finished produce that the East Neuk has to offer.

By encouraging a shorter, local supply chain to flourish, as a community we will be able to retain more of the highly-coveted raw ingredients yielded in the East Neuk here for us, rather than losing out to bigger urban or overseas markets. ”

~Bowhouse Link



“ We believe that small is good and we have a sustainable business supplying Real Bread and Free Range Eggs to a local customer base in Fife, Tayside and Central Scotland. Our hens are completely free range, and although not certified organic, free range on fields that have not been sprayed with fertilizers or chemicals for over 10 years. Our Bread is made from flour, salt, water, time and either a small amount of yeast or a sourdough starter. ”

~Woodlea Stables

“ Our Mission is to be a reliable not-for-profit online supplier of ethical local groceries for people living in or near Stroud.

Our Vision is to help tackle the climate emergency by connecting up the local food economy and promoting low-impact shopping. ”

~Stroudco



“ New Dawn Traders is an experimental business. We trade in wild ideas and delicacies, working with sailing cargo vessels to import produce from across the Atlantic Ocean and along European coastlines pollution-free.

Inspired by people, projects and businesses that promote resilience in local food systems, we have designed the Voyage COOP to apply this way of thinking to international trade. With our network of ships, producers and allies, we are building new models for supply chains that puts planet and people first.

Through our products & events we are invigorating a new maritime culture around sail-powered cargo ships, the goods they carry & the communities they support. Our journey is a symbolic one, playing our part in the global movement to bringing food trade to a human scale & consumerism to a conscious level. ”

~New Dawn Traders

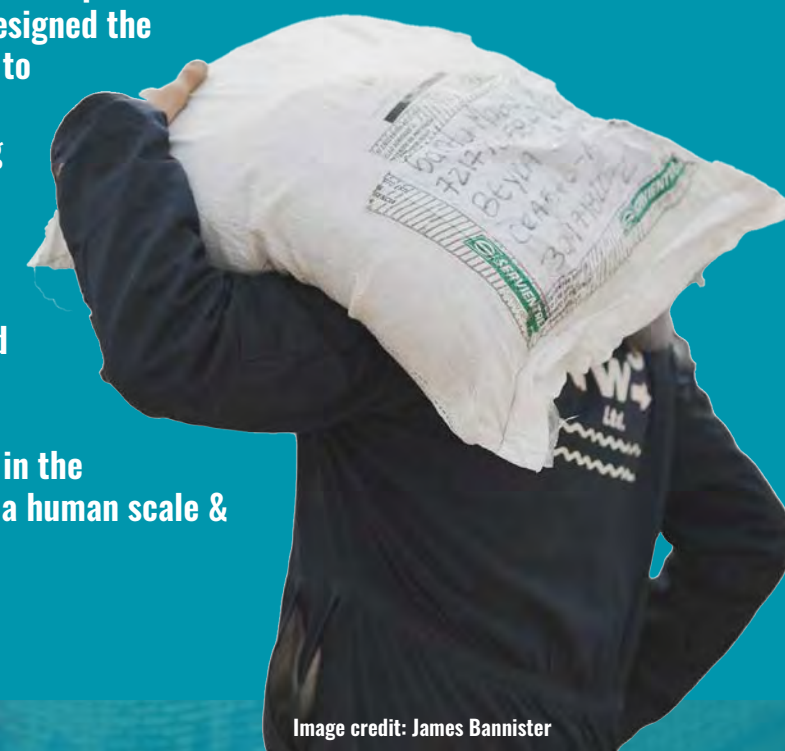


Image credit: James Bannister

95% of UK food retail is sold through 9 supermarket chains. Food is sold at tiny margins, often at a loss. Staff are paid less than living wages. The farming systems that produce this food decimate ecosystems.

In this context creating viable farms and food enterprises built on social and ecological values is incredibly challenging. The Open Food Network community provides not only software, but also support, training, peer learning and a solidarity network that empower community food enterprises to thrive!

“ You are all awesome and we’re very proud to use your platform and be part of this amazing network! ”

~Jon and Laura, In My Backyard



“ OFN helps us at Tamar Valley Food Hubs to bring the freshest and tastiest local food to our customers enabling us all to support the local economy and ensure that our growers are paid a fair price for their produce. The software has helped us to streamline our admin so we can grow in every sense of the word.

We love being part of the Open Food Network; it’s so much more than an online platform; being part of an international community of like minded people who are passionate about local food feels really exciting. ”

~Sara, Tamar Valley Food Hub

“ You have really transformed the way we sell veg and OFN has made everything so much easier. I’m helping to get other people on board with this initiative and we’ll need it more than ever now! ”

~Dan, Peninsula Producers

“ OFN is amazing. We will certainly spread the word. If they are reluctant (and I remember how wimpy I was about all the online stuff and how helpful you were!) do get them to phone me if they want to talk about what it’s like etc. It’s great that you’re being so supportive. ”

~Days Cottage

“ We spent a great deal of time - since the news broke of the demise of the Food Assemblies in the UK - looking at alternatives. We were approached by a number of software developers to join their system but none of them were flexible enough for us. We have a number of collection and delivery options each week and OFN was the only one to allow us this flexibility. We also like the fact that customers can set up weekly standing orders.

OFN is constantly evolving and developing and has an excellent support forum. We are still in the process of adding our FA producers that wished to continue with us but have already signed up new producers one of which we identified via the OFN platform, so if any other OFN producers would like to supply us please do get in touch. ”

~Ruth, Mercia Food Hub



“ The offer of an OFN Marketing Health Check came at exactly the right time for us when we were looking to make the improvements but needed some guidance as to the best way forward. After the session I am enthusiastic to make the agreed changes and start to use the new systems that will be in place. It will be exciting to see the benefits over the coming months. ”

~Rachel, Deeside Food Hub

Open Food Network Supporters and Ambassadors

“ For years I have been writing about the need for a fairer, more sustainable food distribution system. It appears that we now have it.

The online, open source, not-for-profit Open Food Network is owned and controlled by the people who grow, rear, process and eat the food. It is providing a growing Network of food and drink producers and small-scale retailers with a rich variety of routes to market that enable transparency for the shoppers and buyers along with maximum returns to the people who are producing our food. Are supermarkets' days numbered? ”

~George Monbiot, Journalist



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“ Open Food Network is an essential tool. It helps connect these eaters directly with local producers, enabling them to support the emergence of local agrifood systems. This virtual highway is a common resource, using the potential of digital media to connect these communities of eaters and farmers – working together for food sovereignty. It's absolutely essential for these alternative systems to develop, gathering connections and strength, until finally it is the new mainstream agri-food system. ”

~Olivier de Schutter, The former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, IPES Food

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“ OFN is definitely the most co-operative, least extractive digital platform for good food producers I'm aware of. Its a genuine alternative to corporate versions, and is well protected against venture capital takeovers, unlike so many iterations of this sort of thing which have come and gone before. It's a great example of good globalisation! ”

~ Oliver Moore, Arc2020



“ There is a lot of potential for building the resilience of local food economies through internet-based, community-led food hubs, like those the Open Food Network supports – all of which is very close to the aims of the Transition Network. ”

~ Rob Hopkins, Transition Town Movement

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“ We have long known that local food makes sense from an environmental point of view, but the global pandemic has also made us acutely aware of how vulnerable our global food supply chains are. So it is really wonderful to have the Open Food Network cutting out the middleman and connecting us up with local producers. This gives us resilience and also connects us to the source of the food we need to live and flourish.

I've also sat on the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee for five years, and seen how the global food and farming system is dominated by agribusiness and supermarkets. This has led to food waste, food poverty, and a bad deal for farmers as well as some spectacular food scandals. When it comes to good high-quality food with strong links between farmers and eaters, local is always best! ”

~Molly Scott Cato, former Green MEP



From the team

“ I have never previously worked for an organisation that values me in the way that OFN does.

I feel able to bring all of myself to this work - my passion, my darkest fears, my highest ideals and my vulnerability.

This means that I get a lot more from my work than I used to.... and OFN gets a lot more of my creativity than anything else I have turned my hands to previously. ”

“ Working for OFN Uk has given me opportunities to develop, both as a person and my knowledge base, that I wouldn't have got anywhere else.

I have found the team incredibly supportive, inclusive and non-judgemental. ”

“ The work has been diverse and exciting. It is inspiring to be part of a bigger project and humbling to be able to help those who use the platform build their businesses sustainably. ”

“ It is Inspiring to be part of a global movement to build fairer, stronger food systems; working alongside farmers, growers, grass-roots activists and entrepreneurs in so many varied world regions. ”

“ I really love working with the OFN. The team and the food enterprises are an amazing and really inspiring group of people who really care about what they are doing - building fairer, more resilient food systems. ”





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