

Bwyd Dros Ben



Food Surplus

Building Community Value & Innovation Through Food Surplus

End of Project Impact Report

July 2019

Aber Food Surplus (Heather McClure, Chris Woodfield and Chris Byrne)



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Section 1. Executive Summary

This project has complimented Aber Food Surplus in working towards achieving our aims and objectives and a stepping-stone to facilitating Aberystwyth to become a zero-food waste town. Our aims and objectives are as follows:

- Reduce and redistribute edible fit-for-consumption food surplus in Aberystwyth and surrounding areas
- Use surplus food to contribute to local food security ensuring food is fed to people and used in accordance with our food waste hierarchy
- To provide volunteering opportunities for the local community to enhance social capital
- To inspire and empower local people to deliver community led initiatives
- To provide educational material and events, and to promote and facilitate attitude and behaviour change on food and sustainability issues that support the local food system
- Work together with local authorities, voluntary organisations, residents and the community in a common effort to develop the area and improve quality of life

The approach and ethos of Aber Food Surplus is centred on five key aspects / components and three overarching values:

Key aspects / components:

1. Honest, Open and Fair
2. People-centred
3. Holistic
4. Inclusive and Participatory
5. Ambitious

Values:

1. Happiness
2. Community
3. Creativity

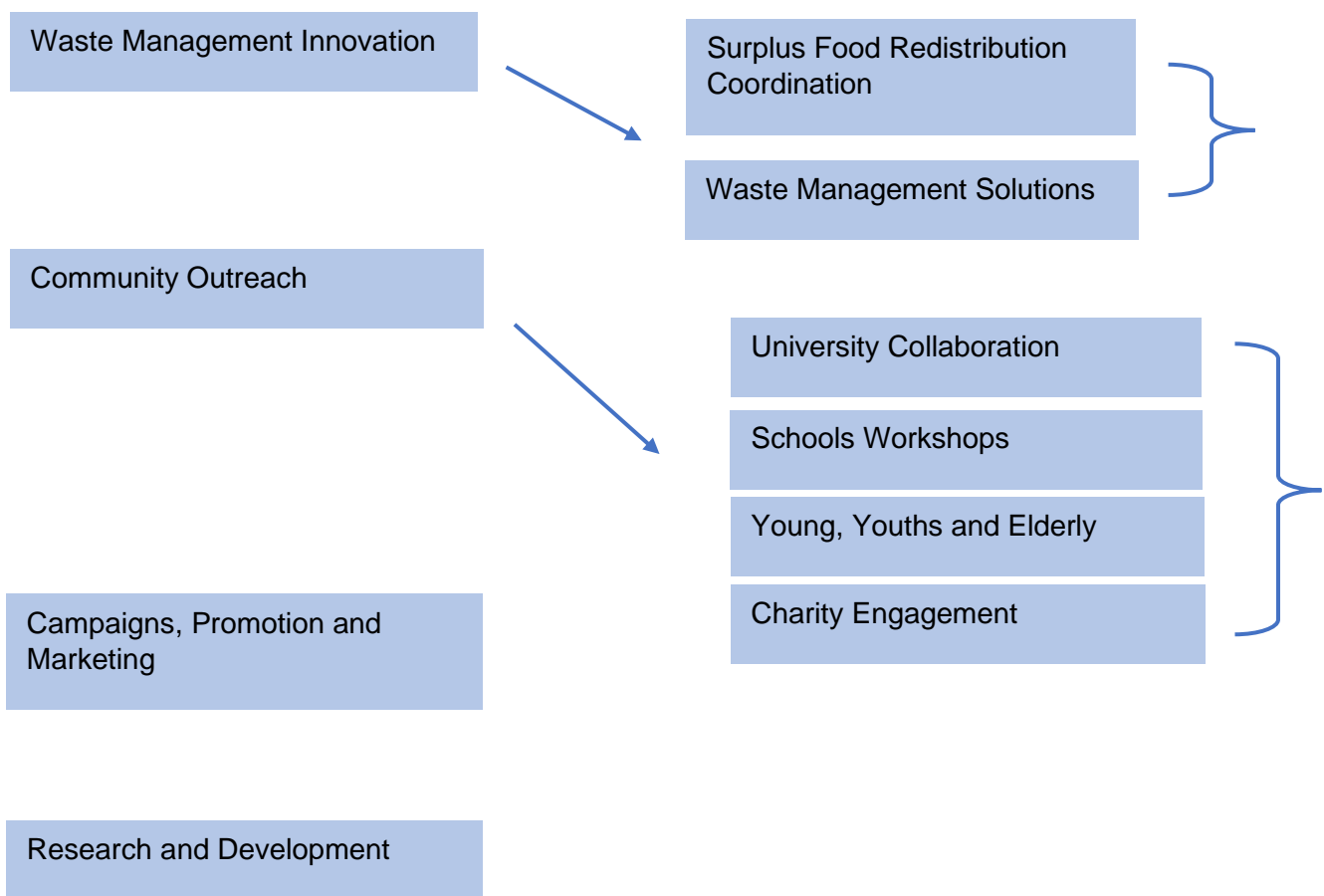
The “Building Community Value and Innovation Through Food Surplus” pilot project focused on exploring, researching and delivering innovate solutions on the work of reducing food waste in Aberystwyth. We aimed to do this by concentrating on four key areas, as outlined in



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the diagram below. The following sections and report describe these key areas including outputs and impacts achieved followed by an overview of the exit strategy following on from this 12-month pilot project. This pilot project was fully funded through the LEADER programme with funds from the European Union and Welsh Government. This enabled three Project Managers to work on the project; two staff members were employed at 30 hours per week and one at 5 hours per week. The LEADER scheme is funded through the Cynnal y Cardi Local Action Group (administered by Ceredigion County Council) which is funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Welsh Government.



Section 2. Project themes

2.1 Waste Management Innovation:

Aims and objectives

In the project application we outlined the potential to explore food waste management in an innovative and more sustainable way within Aberystwyth, ensuring the reduction of both edible and non-edible food waste was maximised. We highlighted a feasibility study which focussed on consulting with a range of stakeholders within the local area including residents, business owners, community groups and government representatives. This would be our main aim in this aspect of the work and would allow for deeper understanding of how to move forward. Our primary concepts for exploration were: expanding food surplus redistribution, and a range of waste management innovation options which included a community fridge initiative, micro-scale anaerobic digestion, use of waste as animal feedstock, community composting and encouraging the use of the Local Authority's food waste collection scheme.

Project activity and achievements

2.1.1 Surplus Food Redistribution

Volunteer Coordination

Training and coordination of volunteers is a timely process when working with food waste. This is because of the nature of food waste which has a short lifespan and there are strict regulations in place to cover food safety and hygiene. All the volunteers are introduced to our premises, trained in manual handling, food safety and hygiene procedures which include opening and closing protocols. Volunteers are subsequently trained in how to collect the food from supermarkets; each supermarket has a different procedure for collecting food waste and operates their collection windows at different times. Volunteers then take the food back to the premises and they are trained in weighing, sorting and storing the food safely.

Since the pilot project began in April 2018, 21 volunteers have been trained in carrying out food surplus collections and/or redistributions. Of these, 84% have volunteered more than once, or on an ongoing basis. The top five volunteers in numbers of hours have volunteered approximately 119, 88, 71, 70, and 69 hours respectively.



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The volunteers have been a mixture of demographics, e.g. ages, backgrounds/nationalities, ethnicity and work-status. Approximately a quarter of volunteers were students from Aberystwyth University with the remaining residents of Aberystwyth and the surrounding areas. Outlined below are three volunteer case studies.



Daemon had been out of work due to a serious injury which required hospitalisation, extensive surgery and a long recovery. After his initial recovery period, we were contacted by his Support Worker who was tasked with finding meaningful opportunities that would enable him to spend time out of the house, start meeting and talking to people again whilst doing manual jobs and tasks which also required thinking. He started volunteering with us in May 2018, initially one day a week, to help sort and distribute the food surplus. This increased to 2-3 times per week, and expanded to food collection from supermarkets, until January 2019.

“The food surplus has been amazing. Without it I wouldn't have got back to work. I like keeping busy and it got me out of the house, meeting new interesting people. Volunteering gave me structure and routine in my week and I looked forward to going.” (Daemon Smith, Aber Food Surplus Volunteer)

“The food surplus have been invaluable towards individuals for different reasons. Whether they are hoping to gain confidence, or simply support the charity, the experience has a positive impact not only on the environment, but the very people who make the food surplus what it is. I have witnessed this first-hand.” (Quote from Daemon's Support Worker)



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Volunteer Case Study: Fay Hollick

Fay started volunteering to collect food waste from the supermarkets and has been a wonderful and helpful addition to the team, allowing consistent and reliable collections to take place.

“I had time on my hands, was out of work, lonely, and lacking direction when I first decided to reach out to Aber Food Surplus to see if they could use my help. I started off doing supermarket food collections on Tuesday nights and alternative Wednesdays, it helped to give structure to my week, and was great to feel useful and part of something which I believe to be important. I’m working again now, life is busy and full, but I can’t quite imagine life without my Tuesday night collections, and I’ll always be grateful to the team for both their welcome, and their infectious enthusiasm.” (Fay Hollick, Aber Food Surplus Volunteer)

Volunteer Case Study: Johnny and Holly

Johnny and Holly are two undergraduate students that heard about Aber Food Surplus through links at Aberystwyth University. They started volunteering to help collect food from the supermarkets once a week which progressed into sorting and distributing the food as well as cooking at community outreach events. The image below is Holly and Johnny running the food surplus stall at the Aberystwyth Christmas Fayre.



“The experience of volunteering at Aber Food Surplus has been amazing and rewarding. It helped us integrate into the Aberystwyth community and feel like we were contributing and learning. It has opened our eyes to environmental issues, and we are now both looking to pursue further study focused on sustainability, thank you for inspiring us!” (Johnny and Holly, Aber Food Surplus Volunteers)

Due to the nature of volunteering, it can sometimes be difficult to find and recruit volunteers. For example, recruiting volunteers to carry out collections on Saturdays at 8:30pm and Sunday



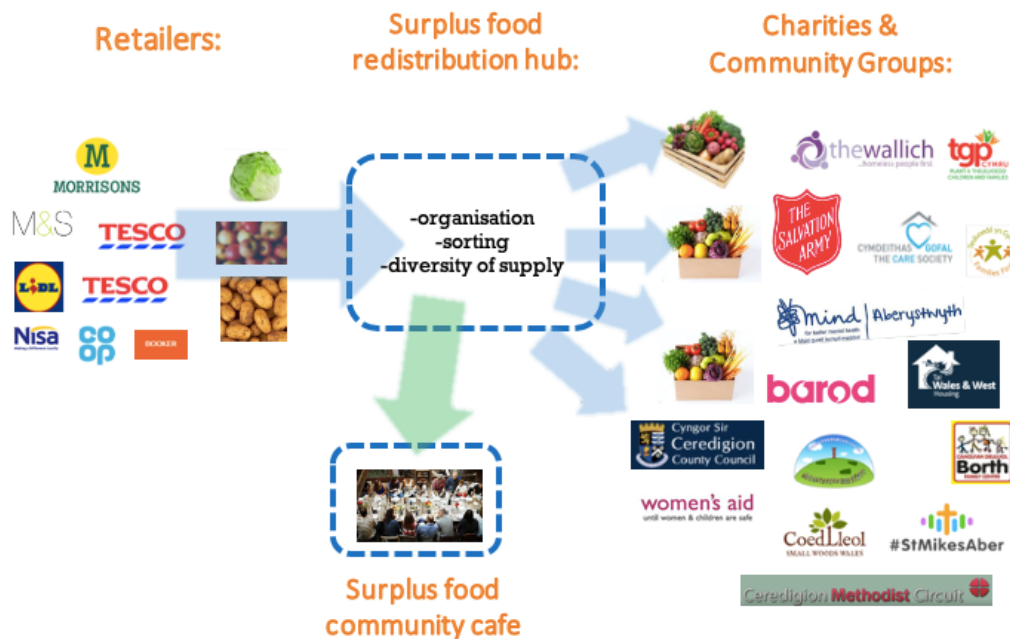
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afternoons has proved to be difficult, and there have been some issues with volunteer reliability. However, volunteer input is invaluable to community spirit and togetherness and has been essential for Aber Food Surplus and reducing supermarket food waste.

Redistribution: Collections and Deliveries

Food collections and deliveries have increased with the rise in volunteers involved in the project. At some points during the project we were collecting more food than we were able to redistribute, therefore we have not focused on facilitating more collections until we have other outlets of making food available to the community. Regular collections take place from five major retail stores, as well as ad-hoc collections from other stores. This food is then redistributed to a range of community groups and charities, as shown in the diagram below.



Food is often near its end of life and therefore community groups and charities cannot accept too much as it will go off before being used. Some projects take more food when their staff deliver cookery sessions for their clients. If this happened more frequently and there was a community kitchen space there would be potential to cook more food, and therefore scope to carry out additional collections from supermarkets, thus utilising and reducing food waste further.

Feedback

Feedback from the groups and charities involved is always positive and we encourage feedback from the projects in all communications we have with them. The groups and charities have been wholly supportive of attempts to acquire more funding as this is a



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service which is crucial to them and their clients. Many of the charity staff members are involved in the Project Steering Group, at a conversational level in influencing the project, and in connecting Aber Food Surplus with their clients. Feedback is usually related to having extra deliveries, less bread, or specific food items for specific events. Charity clients are positive about the impact this food has on their experiences and the positive impact of the community events.

Food Waste Data

Aber Food Surplus have been weighing and logging all the food waste that has been collected from supermarkets which equates to 15.7 tonnes throughout the pilot project duration. Measuring the scale of food waste is something we believe is important. Data from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP, no date)¹ shows that 420g of food waste equates to an average meal, and therefore this is a method of measuring our impact. This demonstrates our food redistribution taken place in the year April 2018 – May 2019 has provided over 37,381 meals within the community of Aberystwyth.

Additionally, all items that supermarkets make available to food redistribution organisations are counted as a donation, which comes off supermarkets tax bills. Therefore, by understanding the tonnage of food waste that is being saved from landfill we can quantify the cost saving we are making to large companies in the area. This highlights how important it is to expand redistribution efforts and the facilitation of the circular economy to provide benefits to local businesses who currently spend approximately £8000 per year on the disposing of food waste (Aber Food Surplus, 2019)².

The Food Waste Power Dynamic: A solution to food poverty?

Redistribution of food waste is seen by some organisations as a solution to tackle and solve food poverty. However, Aber Food Surplus do not agree with this as it does not focus on reducing food waste and is centred on enabling this food waste to occur so it can be redistributed and given to people in food poverty. Food waste and food poverty are two separate issues.

Our approach and ethos are aligned with tackling the root cause of the problem, i.e. reducing food waste and ensuring it does not arise. Redistributing food to people in food poverty does not solve food poverty as it does not address the reason why food poverty occurs in the first place and it is not an empowering process for the recipients of the food. This is one reason why we do not redistribute food waste to the Jubilee Storehouse Food Bank in Penparcau. We call this emergency food relief.

Although, at present, much of our work focuses on redistributing food waste to people who may be in food poverty or vulnerable people in our society, we hope to support the groups and charities we work with to explore and provide more empowering ways to acquire food for these groups of people. Additionally, as we have seen first-hand through this pilot project, food waste is not a sustainable and reliable source of food as some days there is no food waste to collect. Therefore, this cannot be a solution to food poverty. The food waste that is collected by Aber



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Food Surplus is not for a particular group of people, it is for everyone. Throughout the pilot project we have highlighted and communicated this and will continue to focus on reducing food waste.

2.1.2 Waste Management Solutions

The waste management solutions project began by exploring what types of food waste were being created in Aberystwyth. This exploration defined four types of food waste: edible food waste (ambient food / best before date); edible food waste (chilled / cooked / pre-prepared / use by date); cuttings and peelings; and plate waste. By investigating the health and safety regulations around waste disposal and food redistribution, Aber Food Surplus explored possible solutions for how these different types of food waste can be prevented and the impacts of disposal reduced. The diagram below highlights the solutions identified of this investigation. The next step was to scope out the feasibility of implementing these solutions in Aberystwyth, which started by approaching local food businesses.



Business Engagement

In July 2018, Aber Food Surplus organised a local business engagement event to present these food waste solutions and scope out interest amongst food businesses, i.e. cafes, restaurants, and small shops. Although there was keen interest from many local businesses, the turnout was low due to the time-commitment and availability of the management of local food businesses. This demonstrated the need for a more tailored, best-fit approach to meet the needs of small independent businesses one-to-one. Alongside this, we scoped out the interest within the local community of these food waste solutions, which is summarised below along with impacts and achievements to date.

Community Fridge

-Held community fridge community platform event – showcasing the concept and idea of a community fridge and discussion focused on logistics, possible locations, volunteers, maintenance and funding. Next steps included setting up a “Fridge Steering Committee”. (35 people attended) (May 2018)

-Carried out meetings with the Fridge Steering Committee and assessed possible locations, logistical issues, health and safety, whilst engaging with local stakeholders and interested community groups (June 2018)

-Community fridge pop-up showcase demonstrations at public events – Aberystwyth Bandstand and Sea2Shore Festival (July/August 2018)



-Visit to Transition Bro Gwaun’s community fridge in Fishguard and Goodwick to meet the team, gather ideas and learn from a successful community fridge in action (July 2018)



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- Presentation to Aberystwyth Town Council who pledged to fully support the initiative (September 2018)
- Engaged with local businesses to ask for support for the initiative collecting 40 signatures of support (September 2018)
- Received funding from Tai Ceredigion (£1500) and the Hubbub Foundation Community Fridge Network to aid with the establishment of a community fridge in Aberystwyth (£4900) (September 2018)
- Investigated potential properties for the community fridge (October – December 2018)
- Secured rent contract on an Aberystwyth Town Centre location for the community fridge and hub space – 15 Chalybeate Street (February 2019) to start in March 2019
- Carried out building improvement works and preparatory processes within the community fridge space (March / April 2019)
- Secured successful grant funding from Aberystwyth Town Council (£4510) to contribute towards the community fridge space start-up and rental costs (May 2019)
- Community Fridge space soft opening (May 2019) and continual developments, volunteer recruitment and ongoing preparations for the space (May / June 2019)
- Successfully secured grant funding from the Big Lottery Fund – People and Places scheme to employ full-time members of staff for 18 months to establish, implement and deliver the community fridge and hub space – ECO – Environment, Community, Opportunity – Food Sharing Hub project (May 2019)

Community Composting

- Scoped out idea and how this could work effectively through discussion with local gardening and food growing contacts, Penglais Community Garden, Ceredigion County Council Waste Department, Pathways to Farming, and a desk-based study (April 2018 - ongoing)
- Produced templates of community composting scheme for Reimagine Aberystwyth Aber Food Surplus Showcase event (September 2018) and gauged interest
- Started discussions with Canolfan Padarn Day Centre regarding use of their site as a community composting pilot after establishing a relationship from delivering a weekly surplus lunch with the Centre (December 2018 – ongoing)
- Initiated discussions with Aberystwyth Allotments, Ceredigion County Council, Aberystwyth University, local residents and members of the public to determine possibility of collaboration (July 2018 – ongoing)
- Built on relationships with interested local businesses of collection of organic non-edible food waste (cuttings and peelings) for composting which led to discussions with key interested partners (Medina, The Grail, Baravin, Mikeys Café) regarding amounts (kg) of food waste that could be collected (November 2018 - ongoing)



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-Explored possible options for collection of food waste from interested local businesses, i.e. electric vehicle, bikes / electric bikes with trailers (March 2019 - ongoing)

-Obtained Waste Carrier Licence from Natural Resources Wales (October 2018)

-Currently in feasibility stage, with groundwork, resources, templates, promotional and educational material ready-to-go with next steps including securing funding for a Project Officer to deliver this initiative.

Food Waste Apps

-Promoted the use of two food waste smart-phone applications (apps) – OLIO and Too Good To Go, through events, sharing online, email and social media (July 2018 - ongoing)

-Engaged with the team at OLIO, asked for promotional material and resources (July 2018)

-Trialled and experimented with the use of the OLIO app (August 2018)

-Showcased and presented OLIO at Reimagine Aberystwyth Aber Food Surplus Showcase event (September 2018)

-Continue to promote and showcase the OLIO app and plans are in place to deliver a community platform event focused on food waste apps (ongoing)

Animal Feed

-Carried out a desk-based study to explore feasibility in the local area and engaging with Ceredigion County Council and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) Cymru (July 2018)

-Explored possible local animal feed outlets/destinations through local contacts and networks and established relationship with Dyfi Dairy (June – October 2018) and ongoing talks with Borth Wild Animal Kingdom (November 2018 – ongoing)

-Currently in feasibility stage with next steps including securing funding for a Project Officer to deliver this initiative.



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2.2 Community Outreach

Aims and objectives

The community outreach aspect of the project focused on five key areas: Weekly Community Platform; University Collaboration; Schools Engagement; Young, Youths and the Elderly; and Charity Engagement. The team already had experience of delivering effective community engagement events and educational workshops and planned to expand this work further.

Community Platform: The aim was to expand the already successful Pay As You Feel community café to wider areas within the community and deliver this more frequently. Thus, exploring a weekly community platform in four distinct areas of the town rotating on a monthly basis whilst establishing new partners.

Schools Engagement: The aim was to deliver two school workshop sessions running simultaneously and to hold these at a minimum of two points throughout the year. These were to address issues such as food sovereignty, poverty, justice, local supply chains, household food waste, and environmental, social, and cultural aspects of food waste.

University Collaboration: Develop a weekly collaboration that would utilise Aberystwyth University's catering outlets as a space for connecting people to food waste issues, e.g. to serve a lunchtime Pay As You Feel surplus soup in a different catering outlet each week and once a month deliver an evening community platform food event at the University

Young, Youths and the Elderly: The aim was to explore intergenerational sharing and learning through connecting young people and elderly groups together and develop a Food Stories project.

Charity Engagement: The aim was to build on already good relationships with surplus food receipt charities and community groups and engage their clients in utilising the surplus food effectively through participatory cooking sessions and food sharing events.

Project activity and achievements

2.2.1 Community Platform

After initial exploration, the weekly community platform was not feasible, due to staff time and resources. However, since April 2018, we have delivered over 50 Pay As You Feel surplus food community platform events engaging with approximately 4000 people. This has also involved collaborating with several community groups and organisations to implement food surplus events across 15 venues in local area. This has equated to approximately 2500 meals and empowered over 200 volunteers to co-deliver these events providing essential transferable skills and experience. Furthermore, we have expanded and built relationships with 25 organisations to host food waste themed events, consultations and workshops, some of which are highlighted below.



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Aberystwyth University Sustainability Society, Aberystwyth University Students Union, WRAP Cymru, Business Wales, Centre for Alternative Technology, Aberystwyth Town Council, Penglais Community Gardens, Pathways to Farming, Arad Goch, Borth Family Centre, St. Annes Church, Jubilee Storehouse, Coed Lleol, Friends of the Earth, Plastic Free Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Youth Ambassadors, CODA, Borth Rowing Club, Cor Gorbaith, TGB Cymru, Advancing Aberystwyth, Menter Aberystwyth, Salvation Army, Youth Justice Prevention Service, RAY Ceredigion



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2.2.2 Schools Engagement

Over the duration of the project, school engagement activities have reached over 700 students based in five local schools – Plascrug Primary School, St. Padarn’s Primary School, Llwyn Yr Eos Primary School, Penglais Secondary School and Penweddig Secondary School. This has included school assemblies, working with the school Eco-Committee, presenting to work experience students, and delivering lessons and classes. Examples of lesson themes delivered include:

- Systemic Waste and Supermarkets: Is food redistribution the answer?
- Who needs food waste? Food security vs. Food sovereignty
- The food we eat: Who is responsible for food waste?
- Our food system: the impact of food waste and our food choices
- What causes food waste in our homes and our communities?
- Food miles and environmental footprints
- The role of social enterprises in change making



“The lessons delivered by Aber food surplus were well designed, thought provoking and interesting for the students. Presenters had clearly worked hard to ensure that their presentations were as accurate as possible in regards to the exam specifications. The lessons featured a range of activities, such as discussions, presentations and Q&A. Year 11 very much enjoyed their presentations, and AFS are welcome to return anytime back to Penglais.” (Mr Daniel Jonson, Head of Geography, Penglais School, April 2019)



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2.2.3 University collaboration

After initial discussions with Aberystwyth University staff within the Hospitality Services there was keen interest for collaborations and to develop student engagement with food issues and food waste. However, with limited University and Aber Food Surplus resources the University engagement approach shifted towards more promotional engagement events throughout the year and educational lectures / workshops. For example, this has included:

- Food waste engagement stall and smoothie bike – Surplus Smoothies at Freshers Fayre (September 2018)
 - Aber Food Surplus volunteering information stall at Volunteering Freshers Fayre (September 2018)
 - Student Volunteering Week – collaboration with Students Union to deliver volunteering opportunities – food surplus collections and sorting at food surplus premises (February 2019)
 - This Girl Can – collaboration with women empowerment week – food surplus information stall (February 2019)
 - Social enterprise talk and workshop delivered to staff and students as part of AberPreneurs – Careers Service enterprise programme (15 people engaged) (October 2018)
 - Delivered educational lecture for MSc Environmental Change, Impact and Adaptation course, Environmental Change in Practice module “Community Grassroots Initiatives” (12 students engaged) (February 2019) and Geography and Earth Sciences Year 2 Environmental Management module “Grassroots Environmental Change” (80 students engaged) (February/March 2019)
 - Enhanced networks with the student-led society the Organic Food Coop through collection of leftover food surplus
- Furthermore, Aber Food Surplus have strengthened links with the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth and delivered a lecture and practical workshop for the Graduate School of the Environment Masters students, called “A Zero a Food Waste Community” and “A social enterprise approach to a more resilient food system” (60 students engaged) (February 2019)

2.2.4 Young, Youths, and Elderly

Explorations took place to investigate how to access and engage with elderly groups, youth groups, and young people to facilitate connecting these groups. This led to initial discussions and possible collaborations with the Aberystwyth Day Centre, Age Cymru and St. Michael’s Church Elderly Luncheon. Discussions with Age Cymru developed further, the results of which are outlined below. In addition, relationships were established with Tai Ceredigion to engage with their intergenerational sharing group Clwb Ni which connects elderly tenants with Plascrug Primary School children. These discussions are ongoing to organise a



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collaboration. Furthermore, outreach and engagement with young people and youth groups is outlined below.

Team around the Family – Sera Coles

-Sharing food waste with the cookery instructor Sera Coles, Sera provides cookery workshops for teenagers who struggle to engage in school environments. These workshops encourage self-confidence and teamwork, and Sera emphasises how taking a meal home to the family benefits family relationships (April 2018 – ongoing).

RAY Ceredigion – Aberaeron Children’s Fun Day

-A full day of making food waste smoothies on a smoothie bike. We talked with hundreds of families about food waste and shared the story of the Aber Food Surplus project. Young children had the opportunity to use food waste fruit to blend up smoothies on the smoothie bike (August, 2019).

TGP Cymru: Children and Families – Safeguarding Evening

-Provided the food for TGP youth safeguarding evening, youths shared their experiences of being safe online, healthy eating, and they had a period poverty workshop, and discussed the opportunity of cooking with food waste and designing social enterprises (November 2018).



Aberystwyth Community Ambassadors

-Established links with the Aberystwyth Community Ambassadors and Penparcau Youth Club (aged 11-17) through Ceredigion County Council’s Youth Service to co-host a food surplus community meal with the ambassadors to deliver to their families and Year 6 of



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Llwyn Yr Eos Primary School (50 people engaged) (December 2018). You can read more about this event on our blog [here](#).

Youth Justice Prevention Service – Ceredigion County Council

-Strengthened relationships with the County Council's Youth Justice Prevention Service by making surplus food available to their youth clubs, day trips and meetings

-Delivered food surplus smoothie bike Surplus Smoothies and engagement session (20 children engaged) (January 2019)

-Carried out food waste cookery workshops with the Youth Justice Prevention Service. This allowed the youth group to get involved in the design of food waste recipes and food preparation, engaging the youngsters with a journey of where their food comes from, and the importance of reducing food waste. The youngsters appeared proud to be able to take home their meals, and decide how to share their meals with their family (20 children engaged) (May 2019)

Age Cymru

-Attended the AGM for the Borth Age Cymru group. This group have a busy agenda and do not meet frequently, so the chance to attend the AGM and share the project was greatly appreciated. We encouraged a volunteer to present the project, and then facilitated a discussion with a Q&A session. During a tea and biscuit break we carried out short interviews with individuals to capture food and food waste stories. A common theme was how the wasting of food and how we manage food waste has changed through time (January 2019).

2.2.5 Charity Engagement

-We have worked with the Wallich, Salvation Army, The Well and Borth family centre to coordinate food deliveries to support them in delivering their dinner/lunch clubs.

-Collaboration with the Salvation Army lunch club and clients allowed us to provide cooking workshops for clients who attended free lunches. Clients highlighted they wanted to help out and give back rather than be cooked for and served to, and they needed more things to do. After 6 weeks of cooking support one client took on the Salvation Army lunch club, and others have continued to volunteer with Aber Food Surplus (May 2018 – ongoing)

-We have worked with charities to engage their clients in cooking with Aber Food Surplus, this has provided some clients with work experience to go on to catering and food related jobs. It has also provided clients with a meaningful way to spend time, socialise and feel a sense of achievement. We have provided cooking opportunities for clients from Borth Family Centre, Care Society, Wallich, WWHA, The Hatch and Salvation Army.

-Obtained successful Enhanced DBS certificates (November 2018)



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-We have worked with Penparcau Hub and Community Forum to host a weekly food bank on a Saturday morning that compliments the Jubilee Storehouse food bank. The Jubilee Storehouse food bank only takes bread from Aber Food Surplus as this can be frozen, however the rest of their food consists of tins and dried food. The Saturday morning food bank at the Hub is a fresh food bank that is open to all. The Hub have great cooking facilities; however, we have not been able to utilise these facilities in a collaborative capacity and groups we have worked with have preferred to use other venues.

-Aber Food Surplus have been working with the St Anne's Church that host the Jubilee Storehouse food bank to support their summer lunch programme. This provides free lunch time meals to families in the area during the summer holidays when schools are closed. The lunch programme is designed to ease the financial stress on families who receive free school meal support the rest of the year. Aber Food Surplus hosted three weekly meals to share the value of food surplus with the families which attended the lunch. This raised awareness of the Aber Food Surplus project, its aims and objectives, and strengthened the relationship the project has with the church.

Following the lunch time meals, Aber Food Surplus went on to host two evening community platform events at the church. The events further introduced the work of Aber Food Surplus and explored ideas members of the community had on different ways of sharing food. This event provided the grounds for future events, as community members were keen to explore the idea of a pop-up cinema.

-Aber Food Surplus have engaged with the Borth Family Centre to make food available to the families they work with. This was followed up with three community consultations. Community members who attended the consultation meals were keen to discuss other community groups who could benefit from being involved with the project. Community members wanted to support Aber Food Surplus and share surplus food for other community-based events. This has enabled Aber Food Surplus to build connections with community groups in Borth, these groups have been keen to share the message of Aber Food Surplus, and raise awareness of the organisation, and we have since responded to this community consultation by providing food for local Borth groups including the Borth Scouts and Borth Rowing Club.

Canolfan Padarn Community Outreach

The project engaged with Canolfan Padarn, in the Llanbadarn area of Aberystwyth. Canolfan Padarn is a day-centre which supports adults with learning difficulties. The centre management and staff were keen to open the centre to the community to showcase the work support staff and the clients do within the centre and throughout the community whilst collaborating with Aber Food Surplus after hearing about the work we do. The centre has a kitchen which was out of use due to staff cuts and they were keen to re-open as a means of inviting the community to the centre and utilising this space.

After initiating discussions and planning, Aber Food Surplus started trialling a weekly food surplus lunch at the centre in November 2018. This involved Aber Food Surplus staff and volunteers cooking together with clients and support workers from the centre to produce a lunch for the rest of the clients and support workers, with the eventual long-term aim to open this up to the public and wider community. The project allowed clients and staff to learn new



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skills, enjoy working as a team, learn about the issues of food waste and the importance of a circular food system, and contribute to providing the rest of the centre with a healthy, nutritious and affordable meal. The centre was able to reduce costs in sending their clients out for lunch, facilitate a rewarding and social lunch-time atmosphere and use the centre to its full potential.

In May 2019, the weekly lunch-time meals were stopped due to management changes within Canolfan Padarn and the centre not willing to update their food safety records and legal obligations. Although the weekly food surplus lunch did not open to the public as a wider community café, the collaboration was rewarding for all involved with the feedback from clients and staff overwhelmingly positive and a strong relationships built. For example, some clients from Canolfan Padarn have volunteered with Aber Food Surplus in other projects, food redistribution and further community outreach events. With further discussion and support from the centre the project could have great potential in building community bridges and enhancing social capital further.



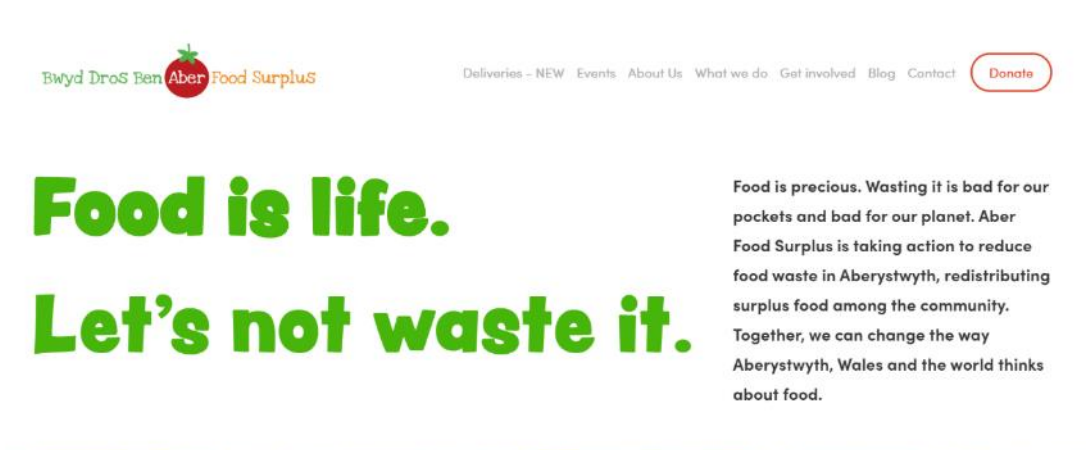
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2.3 Campaigns, Promotion, and Marketing

A key overarching aspect of the project was to implement an effective communication and marketing strategy to continue to raise awareness and showcase the importance of the project and the cultural, social, economic and environmental impacts of food waste. Achievements and impacts include:

- Development of a bilingual logo and branding (April 2018)
- Promotional merchandise - ethically/sustainably sourced T-shirts, aprons and high-visibility jackets (April / May 2018)
- Development of a website – www.aberfoodsurlus.co.uk (July 2018)



- Expansion of social media communication and promotion – Facebook (1300 likes) and Instagram (244 followers) (as of May 2019)
- Featured print and online articles in local publications – EGO magazine (June 2018), Clean Slate – Journal of Sustainable Living (Centre of Alternative Technology) (September 2018), and the Cambrian News
- Online blog articles for the National Assembly of Wales Senedd@Aberystwyth (December 2018) and Ceredigion County Council (January 2019)
- Featured in promotional video for National Assembly of Wales Senedd@Aberystwyth (November 2018)
- Awards and recognitions – Menter Aberystwyth Environmental Awareness Award (June 2018), Menter Iaith Ceredigion Bronze Award for commitment to Welsh Language (August 2018)



2.4 Research and Development

Another key overarching aspect of the project was the research and development theme with focus being to liaise with other similar initiatives and networks, share best-practice and learnings, and explore relationships with potential partner organisations and institutions across Wales, the rest of the UK, and internationally. Furthermore, an essential component was to explore the self-sufficiency and long-term financial sustainability of the project. Achievements and impacts include:

- Strengthened relationships with the Shrewsbury Food Hub and UK Food Hubsters Network to co-coordinate a UK food hub gathering (August 2018 – ongoing). Project visit to Shrewsbury Food Hub to share ideas and best-practice (March 2019)
- Developed relationships with the UK-wide Community Fridge network – administered by Hubbub
- Development of a project Steering Group with meetings every 2 months with relevant local stakeholders and partners
- Continual regular meetings (every 2-3 months) with social business advisor Nick Wilson (Social Business Wales, Wales Cooperative Centre)
- Selected for Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus BioAccelerate course (Aberystwyth University) to explore long-term sustainable social business ideas (May 2019)
- Exploration of possible long-term financial self-sustainability models for discussions and investigations. Applications to grant funders to secure short-medium term financial sustainability (October 2018 – ongoing)



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Section 3. Exit strategy – Moving Forward

Moving forward from the Cynnal y Cardi funding, there are two aspects of the project we have identified as having potential to progress rapidly and ultimately drive Aber Food Surplus toward becoming self-sustainable; the community hub/fridge space and an alternative food waste stream.

Community Hub and Fridge Space

In the funding application to Cynnal y Cardi we set out a plan to work towards the development of a community hub within the town centre of Aberystwyth. We set out a vision to establish a community fridge as part of the waste management innovation stream of the project. Moving forward these two ideas are being combined into one community space.

This is a space for all members of the community to engage with their food system and there are several planned activities or objectives for the space:

- The community fridge initiative – a space where members of the community and businesses can contribute or take food that is perfectly fit for consumption.
- A small catering standard kitchen space – this will be utilised for community café events, and available for low cost use by local start-ups to encourage food entrepreneurship.
- Community group use – an informal, low cost space that can be used for community groups to be established and run from.
- Educational events to promote environmentally beneficial community behaviour change.

Involvement from the local community will be an important aspect of the direction and running of this project and there are several ways in which we will aim to maximise this. Creation of paid positions is a priority and funding has been sought to create a minimum of two Project Officer roles. In addition to these positions there will be opportunities for several volunteer coordinator and assistant roles. In order to help meet our aims and objectives as an organisation we will be continuing to work closely with other local environmental initiatives and third sector organisations.

This project will provide a range of benefits including:

- A further reduction in edible food waste entering landfill or going to waste sectors other than human consumption. This includes the ability to take use-by products and offer them to the public before they are considered unsafe for consumption.
- Enhancing social capital within the area by offering meaningful volunteering opportunities which will include training in food safety and hygiene.
- Boosting local food entrepreneurship by providing a hygiene rated kitchen people can hire and work from.

We have successfully acquired funding from Tai Ceredigion, The Hubhub Foundation and Aberystwyth Town Council for rental and equipment start-up costs associated with the space



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for one year and further funding from The Blakemore Foundation to cover costs of training volunteers and staff in Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene.

Further to this, we have had recent confirmation of securing funding from The Big Lottery People and Places Scheme (May 2019). This will allow for employment of two full time members of staff to facilitate the day to day running of the hub and to coordinate outreach and engagement activities, as well as some funding toward installing kitchen facilities.

The space is due to open to the public in May/June 2019.

Waste Management Innovation - Alternative waste stream

Aber Food Surplus are exploring a collaborative project with BEACON Biorefining Centre of Excellence, Aberystwyth, and Eco-Sphere Worldwide, Bridgend. The aim of this project is to investigate the opportunity for non-edible food waste to become a value-added product that provides benefits to the local community, reduces transportation impact of a waste product, and contributes towards a local circular economy.

This work will engage closely with local businesses, continuing to provide support in reducing food waste being produced, and offering a low cost 'green' disposal service for unavoidable food waste. We aim to establish a local environmental accreditation scheme that will run tandem to this, which establishes beneficial environmental behaviours as a selling point for local businesses.

This project will continue our engagement with the local community by providing volunteer opportunities in the collection and processing of the food waste. The resulting product will be a nutrient rich digestate that has potential in both anaerobic digestion and as an additive to compost to boost fertility; with this we will engage with local food producers and explore the potential for local small-scale anaerobic digestion. This project also compliments aspects of the community composting scheme where there could be potential for overlap.

Through collaboration with a scientific body (BEACON) this work will have the potential to produce research outputs, which will contribute to existing knowledge and future direction of food waste management nationally and internationally.

This project is due to start imminently, with early work focusing on providing evidence on a small scale that can be used to attract investment in scaling the project up. In May 2019, Aber Food Surplus were selected and started the BioAccelerate course run by the Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus with a focus on exploring this within the course. In July 2019 we will be submitting an application to the Landfill Disposal Communities Tax Scheme to support this work, with a vision to it becoming self-sustaining in following years.



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Section 4. Conclusion

Overall, the “Building Community Value Through Food Surplus” pilot project was a success, we achieved our outputs and delivered strong and meaningful impact in taking action on our aims and objectives. The project enabled Aber Food Surplus to develop ideas and solutions to tackle food waste whilst implementing and putting these into practice. Alongside this, the team were able to facilitate positive, exciting and rewarding community engagement and outreach, offer empowering volunteering opportunities and inspire community action to work towards a more thriving, resilient and sustainable local community.

This project was a process and there were many lessons learned by all those involved including the Aber Food Surplus staff team, for example practical and logistical skills such as food safety and hygiene and volunteer training as well as management and project delivery skills, e.g. refining and developing project coordination, strategy and development, monitoring and evaluating impact, delivering effective community engagement and outreach, and interpersonal and empowerment skills.

The project was intended as a pilot, i.e. to explore and scope-out what might work and what might not. Not all aspects of the original planned project reached their full potential. This is why pilot projects exist and learnings can be taken away and reflected on. The project we proposed was bold and ambitious, in keeping with our approach and ethos, we would not have done it any other way and we would rather aim high and challenge ourselves but in a realistic and achievable way.

The main reflections and realisations were, a) this project and work is needed, essential and valuable, and b) more staff time is required to scale-up and implement further solutions-focused innovative ideas and community empowerment, either through additional funding and/or self-sustaining business models. Furthermore, a key take-away was the need to be open to change, adaptable, flexible and to embrace uncertainty, e.g. as individuals, as an organisation and as a wider community. Something we believe we thrive at and look forward to continuing to develop in our work moving forward.

One of the highlights of the project, as mentioned in the Exit Strategy, is the success in being awarded major funding from the Big Lottery Fund (in May 2019) for two full-time paid staff members to develop and deliver an environmental and community hub in the centre of Aberystwyth, starting in June/July 2019 with the funding running until January 2021. This project is entitled the ECO (Environment, Community, Opportunity) Food Sharing Hub.



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References

¹WRAP (no date) 'Reporting on the amounts of food surplus redistributed (weight and meal equivalents; WRAP guidance)' [online] [Access date: 11/07/2019] [Available at: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Expressing%20redistributed%20food%20surplus%20as%20meal%20equivalents%20%28WRAP%20guidance%29.pdf>]

²Aber Food Surplus (2019) Average amount of spending on food waste disposal – figure obtained from discussions with local cafes and restaurants.



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