

Dumfries & Galloway Food and Drink Strategy Workshop

Monday 10 June 2019 12pm – 4pm

The Bridge, Glasgow Street, Dumfries

Meeting Note

Attendees:

Pavlina Van Rooyen, The Earth's Crust Bakery	Sarah Jane Alsop, CD Development forum
Ruaridh Hesketh, Galloway Lodge	Martin Valentine, Food consultant
John Finch, Saucy Desserts	Demetra Pantelouris, Mero's Dairies Ltd
Max Nowell, Steilhead Cider	Penny Nowell, Steilhead Cider
Tracey Roan, Roan's Dairy	Heather Hall, The Usual Place
Wilma Finlay, Cream o' Galloway, The Ethical Dairy	Kirsten Scott, Makers Market
Tony Budde, D&G College	Nick Bullard, Dark Sky Spirits
Dorothy Goldie, Galloway Cattle Society	Craig McEwan, The Usual Place
Jackie Watt, Thomsons Food Service	Angela Hurrell, DG Markets & Garrocher
Gillian Warden, In House Chocolate By Design	Liz Budde, D&G College
Mandy Friels, Environmental Health DGC	David James, CD Development forum
Prof Russel Griggs, SoSEP	Sheena Horner, Galloway Chillies
Fiona Richmond, Scotland Food & Drink	Leah Halliday, Makers Market
Juliette Cooke, DG Council	Ian McAndrew, Blackaddie Hotel / VSWS
Mark Geddes, DG Council	Lauren Milligan, Sweet Inspiration
Lorna Young, DG Food & Drink	Rupert Shaw, Gledpark Venison

Apologies: Kerr Little, Little Bakery; Allen Henderson, Sulwath Brewery; David Ashten-Hyde, Annandale Distillery; Claire Drysdale, Brigston & Co; Ronnie Graham, Barony Country foods, Ali Graham, Barony Country foods; Chris Walker, Selkirk Arms; Russel Pearce, Brodies of Moffat; Morag Dewar, The Pheasant Sorbie; Allana Rogerson, The Boathouse; Nick Morris, Station House Cookery School; Kit Carruthers, Ninefold Distillery; Niomi Brough, Kirkcudbright Farmers Market

1. Welcome and introductions

Mark Geddes (MG) welcomed everyone to the workshop and introductions round the room were made.

2. D&G Strategy / South of Scotland Economic Partnership overview

MG gave an overview of the new D&G food and drink strategy and how this was developed with input from industry (presentation attached).

Professor Russel Griggs delivered a presentation on the South of Scotland Economic Partnership and took questions from attendees (presentation attached).

Action: Prof Griggs to liaise with The Usual Place to deliver a consultation session with third sector partners and those in the workplace with additional support needs.

3. Workshop session

MG outlined how the workshop session would operate – attendees were asked to consider key actions that emerged from the strategy to help shape delivery. Key actions included: an industry working group, collaboration & communication and thinking big/unlocking potential.

Industry Working Group

Attendees were asked:

- What should the remit of the group be?
- How should the group be made up (representatives)?
- Any similar models to adopt or ideas?

Main Discussion Points

- Several groups mentioned Savour the Flavours as an industry model that worked well.
- There was discussion around whether there was a need for a traditionally constituted group; is there an opportunity to create something more fluid and more inclusive?
- Inclusivity was a discussion theme that emerged strongly.
- Internal knowledge sharing within the industry was explored; the opportunity to facilitate peer to peer mentoring / learning.
- The experience of and learning from the farmers' market network was highlighted.
- Could collaborative trading opportunities emerge from such a group, for example a buying group, collaborative distribution or trade show attendance?

Notes from this session included the additional points:

Cover all areas geographically, collect data and carry out industry research, marketing and branding, education and training, lobby on behalf of the industry, signposting, industry ambassadors, promoting for newcomers, connecting suppliers with buyers, training needs, inclusive networking, entrepreneurship, innovation, leadership, ambition, culture, confidence.

No fixed representatives open to anyone who wishes to attend, separate groups for food and drink sectors, right people with passion to deliver, a good chair who doesn't have a single voice, industry led leadership, festival/event organisers, retailers, hospitality/restaurant, training/colleges, farming, representatives from each food and drink sector.

Chef's Club from SEDG. Savour the Flavours. Look at other sectors and use their models, regional food group, Carlisle/Cumbria as Borderlands.

Action: Those interested in joining an industry working group should email MG. MG to facilitate a separate meeting to explore formation of an inclusive approach to industry representation, taking into account the above comments.

Communication: Internal and External

- What can we do better? Five things
- What ideas do you have for making our industry more connected internally? For example, sharing knowledge or advice, peer to peer support, connecting suppliers and buyers.
- What ideas do you have for raising the profile of D&G's food and drink industry?

Main Discussion Points

- The need for information to be accurate and up to date, and the resource challenge required to deliver this was discussed.
- There was discussion regarding the value of face to face events that take business owners away from their own work environment.
- There was discussion around the use of digital technology and digital conferencing for addressing the logistical challenges of attending events.
- Savour the Flavours was again discussed as an example of good practice.

Notes from this session included the additional points:

External: Resources, staff and print, regular consistent clear communications, inclusiveness check databases, zoom – new methods, identity, website, accessible database, collation of info and opportunities, connected industry collaboration, national and international recognition,

Internal: Mentoring, networking, visits, distribution for micro businesses, connecting suppliers to buyers,

Raising profile: Brand identity, logo, raise the profile of DG food industry to the public, focussed workshops, collaboration, Savour the Flavours, Good food awards, link with tourism and events, Flavour Fortnight food festival, business directory (online or otherwise), hub for suppliers traders and market producers, engage more with primary producers, support external markets, engage with customers out with D&G, Council should support marketing organisation locally.

D&G recognition stamp/brand, logistics local database, who has regular deliveries/transport regularly? dedicated transport to food hubs.

Communication - Knowledge sharing, mentoring, knowledge hubs. Improve the basics (maps, signage, leaflets), get rid of hurdles (esp planning), fresh approach – use hubs to hold meetings, creative approach, clear and simple plan, use social media, collaborate, newsletter with links/contact details, zoom meetings & online seminars, live feeds.

Action: the above to inform industry working group development.

Thinking big and Unlocking Potential

- Imagine money and resource was no object – what five things should be done to transform the industry in D&G?
- Imagine it's 2030 – describe what you'd like to see in D&G's food and drink industry?
- Thinking about your business, organisation or sector – what's your burning ambition?

Main Discussion Points

- The challenge of logistics, particular for rural businesses, was the major theme; this included transport infrastructure, production facilities and digital infrastructure.
- Localised supply chains, in particular increased use of local produce by large local purchasers, such as the public sector.
- The potential for a food hub or centre of excellence was discussed.

Notes from this session included the additional points:

Dual A75, railway links, integrated public transport, fund to improve buildings (exterior), working broadband, more activities for young people, drive for customer service, internal quality assurance, local produce used in NHS Council college etc, showcase annual event, food and drink training facility, centre of excellence – inclusive – courses

Regional quality mark, buying groups, lowland whisky trail, distribution group, trainline, link between food and farming, food assembly, net zero (electricity charging, plastic, waste).

Sector Based Workshop

A short sector-based workshop with 3 groups was held after the break to discuss:

1. Food Tourism including food festivals and events
2. Distribution and supply chain
3. Ask from SoSEP (formerly collaborative trading)

Food Tourism was by far the most popular discussion topic, with more than half of all attendees participating in this workshop. Due to the interest in this topic, two discussion groups on food tourism were formed.

The opportunity for collaborative trading was acknowledged and agreed, with understanding that opportunities for doing so may fall out of the planned working group. This group decided to explore instead the industry ask from SoSEP / SoSE in light of the presentation by Prof. Russel Griggs.

Feedback from sessions:

Food tourism / Events

Overall the two discussion groups highlighted that food tourism was a particular opportunity for D&G, with multiple aspects to this, including food festivals, supply

chain development, distribution, tourist routes, storytelling, branding and marketing. Given the strength of interest in this theme, is food tourism the core element we should focus upon as an industry?

Notes from this session included the additional points:

Bigger pull marketing PR, food and drink business expo regionwide, regionwide participation in street markets, food and drink tourist routes, what does the region call itself?, quality mark, infrastructure (accommodation, hospitality, retail, transport), positivity about the region, shared story and brand (videos, books, music, history, heritage, culture), skills education training, Savour the Flavours, Sign on motorway welcome to D&G, fully functioning online D&G food hub, tourist information style food industry resource centre, more organic/eco production esp in farming, the public of D&G are proud of their access to quality food and drink produced in the region, Gretna / Gretna Gateway has a key role in promoting D&G, recognisable brand, destination food/craft festival

Distribution and Supply Chain

This group acknowledged that the foundation for improving distribution and supply chain was there in the form of the farmers' market network, but said more could be done to build upon previous industry development.

The logistical challenge of very small producers supplying through distribution networks across a large rural area was discussed. Could this be addressed through collaboration?

Notes from this session included the additional points:

Farmers market was the starting point for many business and supporting transition
Covering all areas geographically
Savour the Flavours worked through collaboration and shared experience (failed through lack of funding)
Incubator enterprises bringing in distribution

Ask for SoSEP (potential to consider):

This group identified some current structural barriers to growth within existing businesses and discussed approaches and interventions that SoSEP / SoSE could make to address those barriers.

Notes from this session included the following points:

- Mapping exercise to identify existing needs and opportunities for business sustainability eg. Plant modernisation
- Understanding that cost of production and distribution is higher in the South, compressing margins = less resource for ongoing capital investment
- Making use of knowledge transfer via sector experts that work across different businesses, eg food technicians
- Promote wellbeing economy/quality of life to address labour shortages
- Focus on experience led opportunities
- Should we be looking pan South of Scotland but with more localised working groups? All of us working together

4. Actions and next steps

Action: Prof Griggs to liaise with The Usual Place to deliver a consultation session with third sector partners and those in the workplace with additional support needs.

Action: Those interested in joining the industry working group to email MG. MG to facilitate a separate meeting to move forward industry group, taking into account comments from session.

Action: MG to draft note of meeting and circulate to all – those in attendance to email to confirm they are happy for email addresses to be shared in circulation.