Opportunities for Local School-Producer

Food Links in Flintshire

A report compiled by

Mid Wales Food and Land Trust
on behalf of OCW Better Organic Business Links
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1. Background and Context

In June 2014 we were appointed by Organic Centre Wales to write a report based upon the experiences of five schools that ran their first school farmers market in 2010/2011 in Flintshire, reviewing the experiences and exploring opportunities for further local food projects initiatives and activities.

This report provides an overview of the concept of the school farmers market within the wider context of supporting the longer term development of a local food economy and considers the educational value of the project for schools and the opportunities for producers. Further work investigates the opportunities for further developmental activities for other projects in the local food sector linked into local curriculum delivery.

Mid Wales Food and Land Trust is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, established in 2004 to promote opportunities for education community and local economic development through local food initiatives. The directors of the Trust work in a voluntary capacity and the Trust has grown steadily, building good working relationships with statutory and voluntary sector agencies across Wales and UK.

Education around sustainable local food systems is a key element of Trust work, and projects delivered include a network of community based cookery courses, developing seasonal programmes of local food events for the tourism sector, developing major food festivals and a range of school-based education work.

The Trust employs a small team of experienced community development professionals, two of whom are qualified teachers, with a select list of freelance professionals providing additional support as required.

In 2005 the Trust developed the pioneering idea of bringing farmers markets into schools, creatively using the resulting market planning and management process as an opportunity for developing an enterprise project for the pupils to work upon within school. Since this date the trust has successfully worked in partnership with over one hundred schools across eight counties, providing the resources and support to help the school run their own farmers market for their own local community. Over the life of the project we have delivered over 100 School Farmers Markets in partnership with schools across Wales and England.

In 2010/2011 we worked with the five schools in Flintshire, providing support during planning, setting up and delivery of their first markets. For the purpose of this report we have recently contacted all five primary schools again. We spoke to head teachers, teachers and administration staff to establish their views and feelings about the initial success of the project at their school, how easy (or difficult) they found it to sustain the enterprise after the initial market (and without the direct support of the project team), and what help could be given to increase the sustainability of the SFM Project. Their views, plus feedback from market customers/local community and producers, provide the basis for this report and its recommendations.

2. A School Farmers Market

2.1 Background to the School Farmers Market Concept

A school farmers market is an innovative way to introduce to pupils the learning outcomes highlighted by the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship agenda via the
practical activities that need to be undertaken when setting up and running a market within school. Printed resources based around enterprise, food, health and farming, have been designed to ensure that pupils feel included in the process right from the beginning, taking the lead when planning, designing and overseeing the running of each market.

Including the children in planning, design and running of the market has enabled schools to communicate the importance of sustainably-produced local food to the next generation of shoppers (and via the children to their parents) and has attracted people from the whole community to the market, either because parents are collecting children, bringing their children to participate in a specific activity or because of the positive media coverage that educational activities have received.

The project worked with teachers to highlight the opportunities available to develop a wider range of practical, curriculum linked teaching and learning approaches relating to food, farming and the development and running of school farmers markets so that they and their pupils had a more challenging and exciting learning experience. We developed programmes of activities which used this experiential learning environment to support learning in science, key skills, food technology and the healthy eating programme. Where the activities surrounding a farmers market could be linked to other activities e.g. farm visits, cookery activities, hygiene accreditation and other initiatives e.g. Healthy Schools project, it had the most impact as links were made between production, preparation and consumption and business/enterprise.

In addition, the project:

• delivered opportunities for achieving positive learning outcomes in two key cross cutting themes of the National Curriculum – Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education. There was particular focus on delivering: ‘thinking skills’; ‘enterprise and entrepreneurial skills’; ‘education for sustainable development’; ‘the development of social and moral responsibility’; and ‘community involvement’. Potential was also created for teachers to consider using farming, growing and running school farmers markets as contexts for other specific areas of the curriculum – for example, literacy, numeracy, ICT or science.

• linked formal, educational ‘knowledge acquisition’ to the natural seasonal rhythms, exercise, manual dexterity, ‘life skills’, teamwork and essential environmental and health education, through ‘practical learning’.

• put children in a different environment, away from the classroom setting whilst still delivering major elements of the National Curriculum.

• supported in-school and ‘out of classroom’ involvement of children and their parents, so that the target beneficiaries succeeded better, with improved key skills, science and other core curriculum skills

• developed awareness of a healthier lifestyle, through the increased knowledge of where their food comes from and more nutritional diets, improved communication skills and social integration across the wider community.
• involved minority groups so that diverse communities could exchange the food and cooking traditional know-how of their respective cultures/groups and be more integrated into their wider local neighbourhood.

• provided a context for looking at food chain issues and understanding where food comes from.

• provided real life experiential learning to complement the formal curriculum.

• increased the contact between the school and the local community.

• provided an opportunity to involve parents/carers and strengthen home – school links.

• boosted the confidence, thinking and communication skills of the pupils who take part.

• Provided a useful resource to include within reports for school inspections etc.

2.2 What makes a school farmers market distinctive?

• School Farmers Markets provide an opportunity for small-scale producers (some who are currently too small to sell at local town farmers markets) to sell directly to the consumer, including new start-up businesses in their early stages of growth.

• producers only have to make a short term commitment to the market, the price of a stall is low and venues are warm, with tables provided and no expensive display equipment required.

• As school farmers markets are usually held at a time when parents are picking up children there is increased incentive for them to ‘call in’ and purchase, and therefore maximise opportunities for embedding a commitment to buying local.

• The provision of better-quality, fresh food for local consumers who may find it difficult to visit other markets (often elderly consumers who may live rurally).

• It brings a wide range of local produce into rural communities poorly served by shops/services at a local level.

• Increased links with producers (farm visits, market held in more intimate environment, regular communication with school) supports a better level of communication and understanding between farmers’ and consumers and fosters the creation of a social atmosphere and improved community spirit;

• Customers are able to ask questions about the production of their food, or how to prepare and store it, and to obtain truly knowledgeable responses.

• Increase the use of the school building and encourage small rural schools to be seen as a ‘hub’ for their community.

• Promoting social awareness, farming friendships and reducing social isolation.
• The local economy is stimulated by provision of new marketing opportunities for small enterprises and this, in turn increases custom for retailers; keep every pound spent circulating in the local economy for longer.

• Encourage learning for those in the local community, developing life and other skills in a less threatening environment.

• Discussions with parents whose children have been involved in setting up markets and related projects have indicated that they could identify in their children, changes in skills, attitudes, learning and in some cases, future intentions.

3. Working with five schools in Flintshire

Ysgol Rhoselyg, Ysgol Gwenffrwd, Ysgol Bro Carmel, Ysgol Y Terrig, Treuddyn, Glanrafon County Primary

Each School received support from experienced project officers and qualified education specialists. This support includes three formal in-school sessions – an initial visit to inform staff about the project and to explain curriculum links and the project resources available, a structured formal educational session to work with the group or groups of pupils who will be planning and running the market and an attendance at the market to guide the smooth-running of the school farmers market, providing support to both the school and the producers.

In addition we provided continuing support for the schools, encouraging them to develop their market as one element of a programme designed to fulfil learning outcomes through practical activities based around enterprise, food, health and farming. Market planning and preparation is achieved in a variety of ways and we worked with schools individually to ensure that they were well-prepared and able to make the most of the opportunities offered to fulfil their own particular curriculum requirements.

Activities employed by the schools included:

• Splitting the learners into ‘task groups’ with each having its own jobs to complete – examples being – a marketing team, a finance team, an administration team, a procurement team, a manufacturing team, a design team etc.

• Writing to organisers of the local town/village market to explain about their own market and invite a representative into the school to discuss the project.

• Writing to the local papers – marketing within the local area

• Developing a survey to use with customers at the market to enable the group to evaluate the success of their activity

• Choosing and producing a product to sell on the school market stall.

• Working out costs of producing their product, responsibility for collecting money, providing

• Encompass a range of activities that promote the work of local farmers and food producers, introduce learners to enterprise with a social/community focus and stimulate enthusiasm for local food and the countryside which produces it.

The resources included:

• A series of exercises which introduce and develop the idea of farmers markets as an enterprise activity.

• A section which includes a template for a business plan that learners can complete in preparation for, during and after the project.
• Enterprise ‘Challenge’ resources which can be used to guide learners through the activities they will encounter when planning and running a market.

• A teachers pack which provides practical advice and background information on topics such as food miles, food and farming and the farming year, together with a range of curriculum-linked activity sheets to develop learner understanding of local food, farming and the countryside.
### 3.1 Table – Flintshire School Farmers Markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Producers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ysgol Rhoselyg</strong></td>
<td>Initial Visit 29.06.10</td>
<td>Sue Mari – Plants and Cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Visit 07.09.10</td>
<td>Harvies Pies – Sweet and Savoury Pastries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Farmers Market 08.10.10</td>
<td>Sandra Blackwell – Cakes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pant Glas Bach Preserves – Jams and Chutneys</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Katie Evans – Ready Meals/ Snowdonia Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sigworth Meats – Buffalo, Lamb and Bacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Stall</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plants, Painted Pots, Cakes, Biscuits and Apple Crumbles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>(PTA) Cafe area selling hot &amp; cold drinks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ysgol Gwenffrwd</strong></td>
<td>Initial Visit 29.06.10</td>
<td>Cakes for a date – Celebration Cakes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Visit 07.09.10</td>
<td>Harvies Pies – Sweet and Savoury Pastries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers Market 20.10.10</td>
<td>Sandra Blackwell – Cakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pant Glas Bach Preserves – Jams and Chutneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sigworth Meats – Buffalo, Lamb and Bacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Stall</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cakes, Jam and Apple Crumbles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>(PTA) Cafe area selling hot &amp; cold drinks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ysgol Bro Carmel</strong></td>
<td>Initial Visit 29.06.10</td>
<td>Harveys Pies - Pastries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Visit 07.09.10</td>
<td>John Sigsworth – Buffalo meat/Sausages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers Market 11.11.10</td>
<td>Sandra &amp; Lyn – Cakes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Tierney- Cheese</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michael Murphy – Quiches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tabi Moss – Free range Eggs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ben Garbutt – Chutney and Toffee</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Poldon – Cottage Pies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Kadelka Williams – Bags</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Lancelott – Knitted Dolls</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Stall</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cakes, Homemade Ginger Biscuits, Pencil cases decorated by year 5/6, Handmade Scrunchies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>(PTA) Cafe area selling hot &amp; cold drinks, Bouncy Castle for younger children, CPTA Stall selling branded pencils/School Calendars. Raffle at entrance. Gardening Club – Bird Seed Cakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ysgol Y Terrig, Treuddyn</strong></td>
<td>09.03.11</td>
<td>Sigworth Meats – Buffalo, Lamb and Bacon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harvies Pies – Sweet and Savoury pastries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Simply Relish – Pickles and Chutneys</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sandra Blackwell – Cakes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Swans Farm Shop – Meat products</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Stall</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit Crumbles, Cakes and Biscuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>(PTA) Cafe area selling hot &amp; cold drinks.</td>
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</table>
3.2 School farmers market case studies

**YSGOL RHOSHELYG**

YsgolRhoshelyg had developed an impressive garden area with polytunnel within which they grew both decorative flowering plants and vegetables for the table. During the educational visit, children the idea of running a school farmers market within the school was discussed the children immediately identified it as a project which could help them to raise funds by selling their own ‘school garden’ produce.

On the day of the market the hall area was decorated using straw bales to evoke a farming theme and pupils had clearly put a lot of effort into the preparation of every aspect of the venue. Their own stall was well thought out with cakes, biscuits and apple crumbles all being sold under their business name of ‘The Pudding Parlour’. Pupils had written to the local paper and a reporter turned up in good time to record the activities taking place at the market.

Nothing had been left to chance and although this was a very successful market, the pupils were clearly keen to improve for the next one. To help them pupils were asking for feedback from customers which was recorded on questionnaires that they had designed and made themselves.

**YSGOL GWENFFRWD**

Pupils from YsgolGwenffrwd worked hard to prepare for their market. They had produced plans of where producers would be setting up their stalls and clear signs showing people where to go. A team of pupils were allocated to meet the producers and help them to carry produce to the tables and they carried out their duties with great efficiency and enthusiasm, with stallholders noting what a great help they were.

There was a healthy showing of producers with a wide range of produce. School pupils had produced jams, cakes and a large quantity of apple crumbles which were stored in a fridge behind the table and brought out as needed to replenish their stock.

The market was well attended with all producers stating that they were very happy with sales and some asking if they could attend further markets in the area, which was subsequently arranged.
YSGOL BRO CARMEL

The market at Bro Carmel was well supported by the parents of the school community and was very busy considering it was a first market at this venue. Food producers (identified, contacted and supported by the project) were joined by school stalls and activities, and stalls from other local groups such as the local playgroup (Carmel Playgroup) and Holywell Transition Group, who showed a film in the canteen.

Producers attending the market confirmed that the market had been profitable and that they would be very happy to support further markets.

Meeting new customers and discussing their produce was felt to be of great benefit.

YSGOL Y TERRIG TREUDDYN

The market was smaller than the others within Flintshire, with just five producers attending (six with the school stall) but the involvement of the local farm shop provided the children with an opportunity to work alongside a truly local producer.

The school PTA worked closely with the pupils to provide refreshments for the market. Pupils took the role of ‘waiters and waitresses’ and took orders from the customers and served tea and cakes in a very professional manner.

YSGOL GLANRAFON

Great variety of producers including Red Poll Beef with Huw Rowlands – a local farmer who also spent time speaking to the pupils and sold out very quickly! Harvies Pies from Mold had pupils helping on their stall and mentioned that it was the busiest School Farmers Market they had ever attended – they had a fabulous variety of homemade savoury and sweet pastries and cakes and a very large queue!

A local sweet shop also attended with a Candy Floss machine as well as many other producers coordinated by the trust. (cakes, plants and flowers). The school choir welcomed customers with a range of well sung tunes.
3.3 Feedback from Schools

When teachers were asked to give feedback about their experience of the school market project the most common response was that the project was valued because the enterprise is real. Young learners are given the opportunity to take charge, show initiative, be creative and make decisions. The project has a strong entrepreneurial strand and discussions in the classroom are angled towards farming and local food production, and introducing the skills needed to run a successful and sustainable small enterprise.

*When asked how they found the experience, Glanrafon County Primary School said:*

‘An exciting, valuable experience for us and all parties involved….and the food producers who sold said the same. The children were able to learn from and apply their learning to a wonderfully motivating experience. It drew the community into the school in a very positive way and has provided many ideas for the future’.

*Schools were asked how they felt that the markets had benefitted the school*

‘They helped the school with community links’

‘They helped the school promote sustainability within the local community’

‘Promoted a positive image of the school to local people’

‘First-hand experience for all the children and staff’

‘Good to create links with local producers, community and around school’

*When asked how they felt the activities based around planning, setting up and running a market had benefitted the pupils, teachers responded:*

‘The market helped develop an understanding of the world of work, built financial capacity and gave an opportunity to apply skills.

Links to the curriculum, personal, social and emotional

Children taking responsibilities

Lots of children involved e.g. poster making.

Healthy Schools Committee made money for their account to spend on new plants for the garden.’

*Teachers were asked to identify the benefits their market brought to the local community.*

‘Good to make links with all ages in the community, especially elderly people’

‘Introduced members of the community to local suppliers and to the pupils of the school’

‘It helped the community see how capable the pupils are and what super citizens they are!’

‘Increased use of the school from local residents who currently do not have children attending the school and would not normally visit or participate in activities’.
We asked if there was any feedback (positive or negative) from the children, parents, community that you could pass onto the project?

‘Parents, pupils and members of the community thought School Farmers Markets were a great way for pupils to learn and apply their learning.’

‘It brought the community together’

‘Some parents wanted more craft stalls.’

‘Some parents wanted to contribute their own products (mostly crafts)’

‘Parents and local people who bought produce were very complimentary’

‘Increased links with producers and the local community. Parents were able to ask questions about the production of their food, or how to prepare and store it, and to obtain truly knowledgeable responses’.

Teachers were asked how well they felt about the school community working with local producers on the school premises? Were there any issues? Was it a positive experience? Could anything be improved?

‘The producers responded very well to the pupils and treated them in a grown up way, taking their work seriously’

‘Some overlap in communication with producers’

‘Maybe a couple more producers to improve choice’

3.4 Feedback from producers

The first market was held at Ysgol Rhoshelyg where our initial visit was very positive. Staff felt that they had many producer contacts that they could forward on and this enabled us to ensure a good mix of market stalls on the day. Sales were steady and profit made was enough for producers to say they would be happy to attend another market at the venue.

The second market was held in Ysgol Gwenffrwd. The schools enthusiasm was fantastic with the pupils being involved in every aspect of the market. The school had done a lot of work to raise awareness about the event resulting in a high community attendance. Producers reported a healthy profit with some ‘very surprised’ stallholders actually selling a lot more than they envisaged

Ysgol Bro Carmel followed in early November and by now the message had got around. The SFM team (with the support of the remaining schools) had attracted new producers with a wide variety of produce (Cakes, Bread, Veg, Meat, Pastries, Quiches, Cheese and Cottage Pies). The market was another success with producers stating that they were very happy with the amount of money made and would wish to return, should the school run another market.
The success of the three markets in 2010 enabled us to begin to build a small database of producers who were keen to attend the further markets in the area in 2011. The names from the database were made available to all five schools to be used (with the producers permission) when planning and recruiting stallholders for future markets.

Feedback showed that producers considered the greatest benefit of School Farmers Markets to be:

- ‘The chance to meet local community and new customers’
- ‘Business promotion to local community’
- ‘Getting the community involved in the school and children in food production’.
- ‘The opportunity to promote homemade produce locally

3.5 Revisiting Flintshire schools in 2014

Contact was re-established with each of the schools in June 2014. Two of the five schools reported that they had run a total of three markets and would not rule out running more markets. One School said they ran one market every other year (two markets delivered so far) and two schools failed to run any further markets.

- Ysgol Rhoshelyg - One market every other year (2 markets held in total)
- Ysgol Gwenffrwd - No further markets (1 market held in total)
- Ysgol Bro Carmel - Two additional markets held (3 markets in total)
- Ysgol YTerrig, Treuddyn - No further markets held (1 market held in total)
- Glanrafon County Primary - Two additional markets held (3 markets in total)

Schools not continuing with the project stated ‘lack of organisational time’, ‘a tightly packed curriculum’ and ‘other projects ‘as reasons. Ysgol Rhoshelyg was the only school to be looking at a longer term strategy, committing themselves to a market every two years. The remaining two schools did not rule out running more markets in the future.

When Schools were asked if there was anything that could have be done to improve the project or any areas in which they felt that additional support would have helped to keep their markets going the following issues of note were raised:

1. ‘We built some good relationships with some of the producers whilst the project was running and would like to have visited them. It didn’t happen. We would have welcomed help in organising this’.

   When followed up teachers highlighted lack of time (market took place towards the end of term) as the reason that it wasn’t followed up. Support with initial links with producers and organisation of visits would be welcomed.
2. ‘Once it is started it is important to keep it going, for all parties involved (schools and producers). Once it lapses it is difficult to restart because you have to start from scratch with the producers’.

This comment raises many questions. How long is a ‘lapse’? The majority of schools that continue to deliver the project successfully run between one and two markets a year. Many of these build successful long term relationships with their producers, keeping in touch with them between markets by using emails, website links and/or school newsletters etc. Feedback suggests that any help with bringing together local businesses and schools for enterprise activities and/or a list/directory of producers willing to support food related projects and farmers markets would be welcomed.

3. ‘You have to be very organised when contacting the producers. Early confirmation of who will be attending is necessary to help with the pupils planning and this is not always possible because producers don’t get back to you’.

When following up the above comment with producers they highlighted difficulties such as staffing the markets and unforeseen busy periods as reasons why they took time to confirm their availability. The experience of the schools is supported by our own, with identifying, contacting, confirming attendance and supporting new producers being the single most time consuming element of the project. It is however, to be noted that an appropriate number and mix of producers is vital to ensure a successful and vibrant market. If a small school loses just one or two of its producers it can be the difference between a vibrant market and an event which is not considered a success. If that school replaces those food producers with parents selling crafts or other non-food items (which is often the case) then it begins to change the profile of the market with customers spending more on craft products and less on food. This ultimately means that producers make less profit and feel that it is not worth their while attending the next market. Observations have shown that overtime these original school farmers markets often revert to craft fairs or school fund raising sales with maybe one or two producers (often parents) present.

It is to be noted that when discussing the above issues, teachers regularly report a ‘lack of time’ and ‘pressures of other work’ as reasons why the School Farmers Market slips down their agenda. Although the project has been warmly received in almost every school we have approached, it is understandably perceived as non-urgent in an environment where teachers often feel they are struggling to find the time to deliver the basic curriculum requirements.
4. Opportunities for the future – Working with producers to develop stronger school-producer learning partnerships.

Over the life of the project, School Farmers Markets have provided an opportunity for many small-scale producers (some who are currently too small to sell at local town farmers markets) to sell directly to the consumer, including new start-up businesses in their early stages of growth. Producers have told us about the many benefits these markets provide, for example, they only have to make a short term commitment to the market, the price of a stall is low and venues are warm, with tables provided and no expensive display equipment required.

However, although these practical considerations are obviously important, when questioned, the producers clearly value increased links with schools, parents and local community above all else. One producer said:

‘School markets help to provide understanding between producers and customers and improve community spirit; Customers are able to ask questions about the production of their food, or how to prepare and store it, and to obtain truly knowledgeable responses’

Another said that he felt that ‘reaching the customers of the future’ was very important to him. Many producers told us how enjoyable and rewarding it was to work alongside the pupils, sharing with them their passion for their product.

Over the course of the project we have become aware that many local producers would be happy to give up some of their time to support their local school or community. We have helped to arrange school visits to producers premises and also producer visits to schools (outside of the SFM project) but due to project time limits and operational constraints we were not able to offer the ongoing support needed e.g. although producers are keen to work with schools they may not be confident with delivering a classroom presentation or facilitating a workplace visit.

4.1 Facilitating partnerships between schools and producers

A project that could facilitate partnerships between school and producers (from primary producers through to manufacturers) helping teachers, pupils and parents to better understand their local food industry and to help deliver the curriculum by using food as a context for learning. Working with schools and local producers, the project would help to create and develop valuable educational partnerships that support ‘A Curriculum for Excellence’. Pupils will gain a better understanding of the production and processing of food and will, crucially, gain practical skills via real life experiences and active engagement with industry. The longer term content would allow more in depth temporal or sequential learning including the whole farm year, agricultural or rural geography or ‘walking the food chain’ from product to plate.

Producer/school partnerships will be able to

- bring the local food sector to life by using the everyday experiences of growing, producing and selling local food. To engage in practical sessions, visits, careers events, lessons, projects and competitions.
- encourage pupils to lead a healthier lifestyle, through the increased knowledge of where their food comes from.
• help young people understand how skills and qualifications in subjects such as science, home economics, computing, design, IT and technology plus others link to food & drink jobs.
• provide both a wider and deeper context for looking at food chain issues and understanding where food comes from;
• offer learning in a different environment, away from the classroom, whilst still delivering major elements of the National Curriculum.
• increase the contact between the school and the local community;
• challenge the myths about what it is like to work in the sector and show how a career in food can be rewarding, with many opportunities.

4.2 Virtual Producer Visits and On Line Learning

The producers that we have worked with are passionate about the food they produce and want to share their knowledge and expertise with schoolchildren to tell them about where their food comes from and show them how it is made. We know from talking to teachers that time, cost and logistics can be a real barrier to taking their pupils on field trips unless funding is available to provide not just direct costs but other time to support teachers and producers with the logistics of project activity planning and development. The internet provides some great opportunities for linking with others and sharing.

Discussions with producers have lead us to believe that many would be happy to take part in a project that could produce ‘online field trips’ or similar opportunities that could give primary schools the chance for pupils to make virtual visits to places they wouldn’t normally be able to go and learn more about the local food produced in their area. This could also be expanded to include a ‘walk through the local food chain’ beginning with a local farmer and following a particular item of produce from the field to producer and food preparation to sale.

5. Opportunities for the future – Other complimentary projects for schools who have taken part in the schools farmers market project

For schools unable to commit to longer term school/producer partnerships, but which are keen to participate in further enterprise challenge initiatives, a range of piloted options are available for consideration.

5.1 The Bulk Box Challenge

The bulk Box Challenge is a project most suitable for pupils working at key stage level 2. The project is similar to many of the ‘Veg Box’ initiatives currently running around the country, however this enterprise activity belongs to and is run by, the pupils. It provides an opportunity for pupils to take part in a ‘real’ community project, liaising with local producers and enabling parents and members of the local community to regularly purchase locally sourced fruit and vegetables. The Bulk Box Challenge can be run as a ‘stand-alone’ project or can be used as progression from the School Farmers Market Enterprise Challenge.

Parents will be able to order fresh produce from a list sent home with pupils at the start of the week, and pick up their ‘Bulk Box’ at a predetermined time at the end of the week (times/days/prices to be decided by the schools.

The pupils will be responsible for producing, distributing and collecting orders from (initially) parents and (eventually) others in the school community, working out bulk quantities required, making up and labelling boxes for collect, ensuring the customer gets the correct box and taking and recording
payment. The school will need to have direct contact with local farmers/producers to ensure a constant supply of local seasonal produce.

Activities for pupils could include:

- Liaising with producers – the school should aim to source as much of its fresh produce as possible from local producers. You may be able to use the contacts that you have made through hosting your school farmers market.
- Marketing, producing a newsletter, producing order lists (with changing seasonal options) ensuring lists go home with pupils and/or are available for those not linked to the school.
- Making up individual Bulk Boxes in time for collection. Overseeing collection and keeping accurate records of money taken.

This project will allow pupils to play a full part in the community and take an active role in a successful social/community project whilst working in partnership with local food producers

In addition to this the project will:

- increase the availability of locally grown produce for those linked to the school and others in the local community.
- be convenient for parents and those living in the area local to the school.
- Can run for any length of time deemed suitable by the school – a term, a year, seasonally etc.

5.2 The Grow for the Gate Challenge

An activity that all pupils can participate in, but it is particularly useful for younger children (Foundation Stage, Key stages 1). Many schools now have growing areas which provide spaces for pupils to produce their own fruit and vegetables, but often the produce, when fully ripe, is given away. The Grow for the Gate activity provides an educational framework for the selling of school grown produce to parents and others in the local community.

Pupils will need to begin by looking at what and when they plant up their garden and then work out when they will have enough produce to sell on their stall. This can then form the basis of a timetable for further activities which should focus on the enterprise aspects of selling produce grown by the school (e.g.: setting up your market stall, costing your produce) and could therefore form an introduction to the school farmers market enterprise challenge

Activities could include:

- Considering when should you hold a sale and what produce will be available at what time of the year (seasonality).
- Letting people know about your sale.
- Planning your school garden to ensure a range of produce through the academic year for your ‘Grow for the Gate’ sale.
- Collecting excess produce from parents (when plentiful) to sell at the gate or process further e.g. apple crumbles.
5.3 The Community Feast Challenge

The Community Feast Challenge is most appropriate for pupils working at key stage level 2. The activity encourages them to plan and deliver a ‘local food based’ event for a group of elderly people (or other identified group) from their local area, highlighting the role of the school as a hub within the local area, giving something back to the community and servicing local need.

Schools are encouraged to use ingredients that are, where possible, sourced from their own growing area or via links with local producers to provide a good quality, locally sourced meal for those attending. Although food provides the reason for getting together the project also gives those at the feast the opportunity to meet with others in a social setting, which in turn helps to break down isolation and make the connections that can build an enhanced community spirit.

Pupils are asked to think of suitable menus for the event e.g. healthy options, themed event, cooking for different age groups. This provides opportunities for pupils to be innovative, inspirational and have fun with food whilst gaining the confidence, skills and the understanding to make healthy food choices in the future.

Pupils can be asked to identify and contact individuals or groups within the community, inviting them to attend an event where a meal will be produced, by themselves, using locally produced ingredients.

Activities could include:

- Researching different menus and looking at different aspects food (price, additives, food miles) before deciding on what food you will produce and why it has been chosen.
- Producing themed decorations to ‘set the scene’ for your event.
- Trailing different menus with different groups before deciding on your event.
- Liaising with local producers and groups in the local community.

6. The Pop-Up Restaurant Enterprise Project

The Mid Wales Food and Land Trust has just completed a pilot project working with twenty schools to develop and deliver School “Pop-up” Restaurants in partnership with local professional chefs, creating menus from fresh, locally sourced ingredients. This project, again, used local food as the centrepiece of practical and sustainable project, with educational outcomes that extended beyond the learning aims of the current curriculum. In addition to providing an innovative new enterprise opportunity for schools to participate in as a stand-alone project, participation by schools could also be viewed as progression activity for those schools which have taken part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities – for example, the Food for Life, Healthy Living and School Farmers Market initiatives.

This project has similar structure to the school farmers market project. The project officer worked closely with each school to help them develop their project ideas, incorporating any educational/curriculum themes that the school may have been working towards at the time of project participation, where appropriate. During the educational visit pupils were encouraged to consider the planning, marketing, financial and logistical aspects of setting up their community restaurant and record their ideas using the business plan in their business plan which remained with the school and could provide a blueprint for further repeats of the project with other classes as they pass up through the school.
Schools were encouraged to see the project as a "mini-enterprise", selling tickets to their restaurant so that the event could raise a small net surplus of income over expenditure - this net amount could then be used to provide the working capital for the next event, or, in the event that the community meal project was not repeated – the school could ensure that the surplus generated was used specifically for other school eco-activities, such as farm visits or school growing activities.

Pupils benefitted by working on a ‘real’ community project, which provided ‘real’ financial, social, educational and local economic benefits. Local people were able to participate in a community meal which celebrated local food and raised the profile of talented local chefs within their own local school building, complementing the Welsh Government’s Community Focused Schools initiative.

The project was designed in a complementary way such that it could be easily integrated into a teacher’s annual Scheme of Work bringing clear “added value” in the achievement of educational objectives, and is not perceived, by staff, to be an ‘add on’ activity which would require additional work for no clear educational gain. All necessary information and support was supplied to each school to ensure all creative, logistical and administrative aspects of event management were considered before each event was delivered. This included ensuring compliance with regulation and best practice.

For each event our original aim was to identify and work in partnership with a local professional chef to create menus from fresh, locally sourced ingredients. We worked closely with each school to, where possible, recruit local professional chefs to support their project. One of the notable outcomes from the two year pop-up restaurant project was the engagement of the school catering staff. As originally conceived, the school pop-up restaurant project was about linking schools primarily with local hospitality businesses, which in turn would form links with local producers.

Once the project was up and running a number of schools made specific requests for their kitchen team to take the place of the local hospitality businesses because the schools enthusiasm had ‘rippled out’ through the staff and into to cooks.

Where these school kitchen-local producer links were forged, the schools proactivity in delivering these pop-ups were exceptional, due to staff ownership. This observation is of particular note with reference to the BOBL project objectives of increasing local procurement interest in the school catering sector. Where active interest and demand is coming bottom up from the schools themselves, this is likely to have greater impact than any external or hierarchical influences alone.

There is therefore a considerable opportunity to explore the learning from the pop-up restaurant project to develop further work on direct school led local procurement initiatives driven by teachers, children and kitchen staff working as a team i.e. school projects as a catalyst to create bottom-up change in school procurement behaviour rather than waiting for the harder-to-generate top-down change to filter down.
7. **Addressing resources/management issues**

The following issues/suggestions have been put forward by teachers and producers during the course of our research, and we feel need to be taken into consideration should any of the proposed projects be taken forward.

- Financial support – School travel, recompense for producers taking time out of their business etc.
- Skills support for producers – confidence, production of materials
- Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme check
- Access to a network of producers who wish to engage in school activities and want to share their ideas, experiences and resources and associated network development.
- Project officer time to develop, deliver and manage the project.

8. **Summary and Conclusions**

The content above summarises the work done by Mid Wales Food and Land Trust on school farmers markets within Flintshire, and identifies opportunities and issues for further development and expansion of activities and initiatives working in association with Taste of Flintshire.

Specific outcomes for Flintshire schools participating in the school farmers markets project includes a database of producers and suppliers willing and able to work with schools in bringing local food into the mainstream education arena, and this offers significant opportunities for further growth of educational initiatives tailored to individual schools' needs.

The issue that needs to be addressed, however, is how to optimise the potential. The report highlights the inability of schools to fully explore and exploit the opportunities themselves, purely because their focus is, quite rightly, upon curriculum delivery in line with ESTYN requirements and expectations.

Supporting schools with specialist outside expertise focused upon exploring and developing strategic synergies and operational inks between education, local food and farming, local economic benefits and the schools' role in their communities will generate a range of beneficial educational, social and economic outcomes at school and community levels.

This outside support will also allow the schools to develop greater confidence and clarity in their own strategy for food in the school. Local food will become embedded in a school’s culture only if the school staff are emboldened to consider and explore the possibilities from within, and within the context of their operational environment.

With this support, schools will be able to develop and expand on the work done to date, in directions decided at school level, and relevant to the school's needs and role within its community. From further school farmers markets, to follow on projects, a range of opportunities exists, starting from one-off projects to grow confidence, with the capacity, ultimately, for school cooks to bring local food on to the agenda and into school menus.