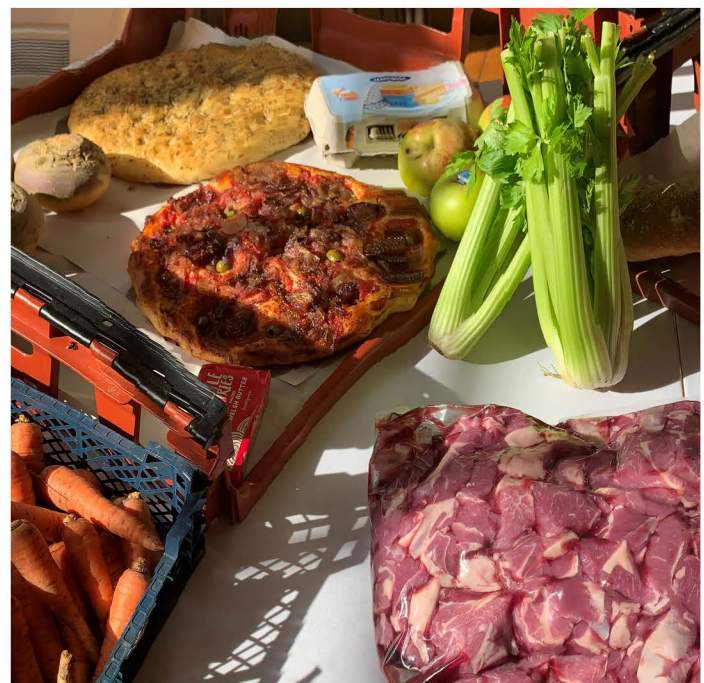




Marches Good Food Movement Concept Note

June 2024



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Mission statement

The four sustainable food partnerships in the Marches bio-region (Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys, Shropshire) are seeking funding to support their collaborative good food movement, driving systems change for a resilient, regenerative regional food system.

Vision

The Marches is characterised by a holistic, whole-system approach to good food and drink, building resilience and supporting the health and wellbeing of current and future generations across the region and supply chain.

Context

Each of these council areas is a [Sustainable Food Place](#) and hosts an established food partnership with an experienced Coordinator and cross-sector Board or Steering Group: [Bwyd Powys Food](#), [Herefordshire Food Alliance](#), [Monmouthshire Food Partnership](#) / [Partneriaeth Bwyd Sir Fynwy](#) and [Shropshire Good Food](#).

The partnerships understand 'good food' to be: safe, minimally processed, ethical, and sustainable. Healthy food is our focus, but luxury and added-value products can also meet our definition of good food when enjoyed as a treat.

The four Marches local authorities recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop the ground-breaking Marches Forward Partnership, working together cross-border to maximise the untapped potential of the Marches area. The four sustainable food partnerships' collaboration has been adopted by the Marches Forward Partnership under the 'Food, Rural Development and Visitor Economy' area of focus, which is led by Monmouthshire County Council, with a brief to:

inspire the unique food culture of the Marches ... explore sustainable food and drink development, improve local supply chains to support rural livelihoods and market activities ... [and] investigate the concept of a 'bio-region', in which the Marches provides a network of sustainable land managers to showcase good practice.

Track Record

The food partnerships have an established track record of bringing stakeholders together locally and regionally. Recent and ongoing highlights include:

Shropshire • Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award, 2023 • Shropshire Good Food Trail, 2023– • Marches Real Food and Farming Conference and Network, 2023– • Citizen's Good Food Challenge 2003– • Schools Food Web Action, 2024–	Monmouthshire • Welsh Veg in Schools Supply Chain Investment Scheme, 2023– • Abergavenny Spring Food Fair, 2024 • Community 'Cook & Share' days, 2023 • Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire Farmer Network, 2023– • Monmouthshire Food & Drink Business Network, 2023–
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Powys • Sustainable Food Procurement Hub, 2022– • Food Summit, 2023 • Future Farms Project, 2023– • Community and School food workshop delivery with Powys Teaching Health Board and Powys County Council, 2023– • Welsh Veg in Schools supply chain investment scheme, 2024–	Herefordshire • Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award, 2023 • School Food Pilot Project, 2023 • Healthy Schools Programme Launch, 2024 • Autumn Feasts 2023: River-Friendly and 100% Herefordshire • Food Priorities embedded in the Climate and Nature Partnership Board • Picking and Processing Project (surplus fresh produce to food larders) 2023–
Regional Collaboration In 2022/23 the four partnerships successfully won joint funding for a feasibility study into regional dynamic food purchasing. Funding from the Dixon Foundation and research conducted by the Countryside & Community Research Institute, University of Gloucester, led by the collaborating partnerships. Future collaboration will build on the results of that study as per the priorities identified below.	

Priorities

Build public awareness and create active food citizens

Actions at local level through which food partnerships support, facilitate and drive food system change in their counties.

Foster a strong local food economy through supporting producers and supply-chain development

Regional collaborative actions to create greater impact and reach at an ecosystem scale on agro-ecological land use and supply chain development.

Provide vision and voice for bio-regional food system policy and practice

Regional and national actions to amplify the bioregional approach to food systems change.

Outcomes: The Case for Collaboration

- Strong county food partnerships champion cross-sector and place-based food-system action and collaborate to build a good food movement across the region.
- Community-led growing, cooking, and sharing initiatives increase scale, reach and sustainability, enabling more people to produce and eat healthy, nutritious food.
- Support for the creation of shorter, closer supply chains, development of local infrastructure and new routes to market for regenerative produce for public and private sector – regional approach brings market scale
- Skills and capacity built amongst young people through training and work placement opportunities in agro-ecological farming, provides careers paths into rural livelihoods within the region.
- The Marches grows its reputation as a food and drink visitor destination with renowned Good Food Trails, Food Festivals and Shows in every county.
- A bio-regional approach to create a more localized and resilient food system demonstrates impact at scale and the potential for regional policy engagement.