



Locavore CIC

Look back & look ahead

Review - 2017/18 - 2018/19

May 2018

Summary:

We launch the report to coincide with the official opening of our new store at 349 Victoria Road, a milestone we have been working towards for quite some time and are delighted to have reached.

The opening of our new store is testament to a huge amount of hard work from our team and the massive amount of support and belief in our ideas from our customers, supporters and agencies.

The store achieves all sorts of firsts. It's the first social enterprise supermarket in Scotland, the first large mostly organic, mostly unpackaged store in Scotland, it is the first fully organic cafe in Glasgow and has the first Swiss Franc operated urban milk vending in the country!

Now a month into trading we have found the store to be much more successful than we ever imagined with our sales in the shop running three times above our projections.

Across the rest of the organisation the last year has also been one of fast growth, change, and successes.

Our veg box scheme has grown considerably over the year, we had our most successful growing season and we acquired a wholesale distribution business which has positioned us as a notable player in the supply chain to other progressive retailers around the UK.

Collectively all these activities place us in a position to achieve much more in the future, and ultimately make a greater contribution to our vision of building sustainable food networks which work for the benefit of society.

In this short report we will look back over how we have been doing over the past year and forward to the next 12 months.

The year ahead is an extremely exciting time for us which holds the opportunity to be the sort of enterprise we have aspired to be since our inception. An organisation which can be looked to as a glimpse of what is possible to be achieved as a real working alternative to mainstream supermarket supply chains.

Business Activities:

Retail:

The biggest achievement of the last year has been the opening our our new store.

This comes following a year of near month on month increases in footfall and overall sales. Since opening at Victoria Road we have been achieving sales at 3 times that of our projections for shop.

Plan for the year ahead:

Over the next year we hope to build upon the success we have had in our new shop so far and continue to improve it and attract more customers. We've got space to expand new lines and departments and hope to get an off sales alcohol licence to sell organic wines and beers.

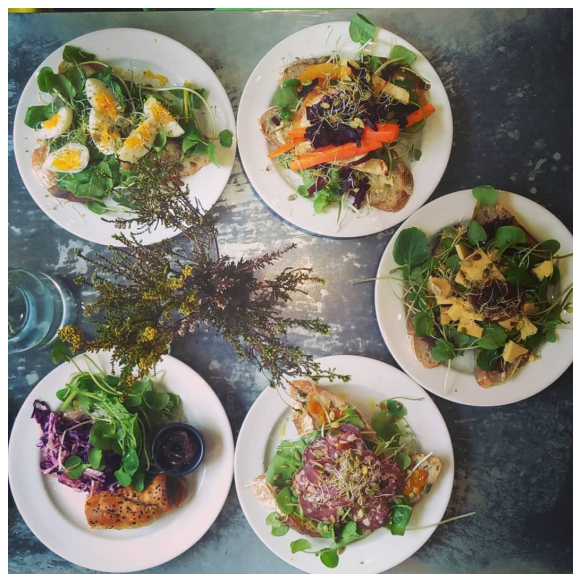
Cafe & Kitchen:

Our cafe opened alongside our new shop and is the first fully organic cafe in Glasgow and one of only a few on Scotland. Its offering of soup, salads and specials is proving popular alongside coffee and cakes.

Plan for the year ahead:

We plan to continue improving and developing the cafes offer and to achieve 5 star in the Soil Associations 'Organic Served Here' award for serving a fully organic menu.

Besides the cafe we will begin producing food in our kitchen for sale through our own shop such as jams, chutney and ready to eat meals. We are also planning to develop an organic catering offer for parties and events.



Veg Boxes:

Locavore veg boxes have been going through a year of exponential growth. From April 2017 to April 2018 veg box customer numbers rose from 370 to 800 customers. Alongside this we saw increases in average spend through introducing new lines like chilled vegan boxes. Our delivery area covers Edinburgh, Ayr, Dumbarton and Stirling.

Plan for the year ahead:

In the year ahead we hope to pass the 1000 customer mark, expand our grocery deliveries and develop our online Veggiepedia guide.

Wholesale Produce:

The wholesale side of our business remained fairly steady over the year with it being a very small part of what we do. Customers include The Project Cafe, Bilson Eleven and Dig In Bruntsfield.

Plans for the year ahead:

Wholesale supply of local organic produce is something we will work hard to expand this year. We think that getting more local organic food into cafes and restaurants could have a massive impact in raising awareness, and expectations for well produced sustainable food.

Over the next year we will develop software to make dealing with many small customers and suppliers quicker and more efficient for growers, our admin team and customers. We'll also put energy into better promotion of the wholesale produce offer and our suppliers. We have been fortunate enough to secure funding through Glasgow City Councils Social enterprise and co-operative fund to undertake this work.



Trading:

In January 2018 we acquired Healthy Oils, a wholesaler of organic groceries to other progressive retailers and caterers around the UK. Although most people aren't aware of this business strand it is a very significant part of our total turnover and one which has the potential for much growth and contribution to our goals of building alternatives to conventional supermarkets and their supply chains.

Plans for the year ahead:

In 2018-19 we plan to develop Trading further by producing a catalogue & website and through working closer with producers directly to add to our product range. We will also work to develop our relationships with existing customers and expand our customer base of progressive independent retailers and caterers.

Growing:

The 2017 growing season was our most successful to date and one in which we proved that a small scale organic market garden can be financially sustainable in the west of Scotland. Collectively our three growing sites produced over £30k at farm gate values, or around £53k at retail values.

Plans for the year ahead:

For the 2018 season we have been even more ambitious and aim to considerably increase production. To allow us to try and achieve this we have invested in a new propagation poly-tunnel and welcomed three new full time members of staff to the team who have brought experience in small scale organic horticulture from Ireland, Sweden and England.

We're confident we will double the value for production this year and further prove the financial viability and potential productivity of growing vegetables organically on a few acres in the west of Scotland.

Despite the increase in production our ability to sell vegetables overshadows what we can grow on the land we have available or can be sourced from very local producers. As such we are investigating options to access more land which we can use to increase production of local organic produce beyond this season.



Our Projects:

Grow the growers:

Our Grow the Growers programme aims to help gardeners take the first steps in commercial organic growing. On our small urban site near Queen's Park, the Urban Croft ten growers join us each growing season to try out small scale commercial horticulture. They get their own 25 sq m plot of land where they grow organic produce which is then sold to our shop and veg boxes. We meet for weekly gardening sessions in which we also tend to communal beds. We also have monthly sessions at our different sites so the growers can get a better insight to market gardening.

Successes from 2017 included the set up by a 2016 new grower of 'Jackie and the Beanstock' a market garden in Renton which now supplies us and other local shops. Three of the 2017 growers have also secured a short term lease on some land on the Southside where they are setting up a growers' cooperative. Some other members are also looking for land.

Plans for the year ahead:

This years new growers are at the very start of their journey having just started sowing their first seeds at the Croft. As a project we are looking to secure more land which we can use to provide larger plots to those who have successfully grown with us on a small scale for a year. This has become a priority as our ability to sell local organic produce outstrips what is available.

Zero Waste:

Thanks to support from Zero Waste Scotland we have been able to go much further than we would otherwise in implementing measures to reduce waste across Locavore. This support has allowed us to install a milk vending machine which is saving around 500 plastic bottles per week, and to offer many more food and goods available loose.

Plan for the year ahead:

Throughout the year ahead we will be running workshops and events to engage our customers and the wider community in achieving their waste reduction aspirations. We hope these events will provide a space for discussion and creativity, whereby we can all share techniques towards a waste free world. To achieve this we look to collaborate with local reuse/recycling projects, organise film screenings and cooking workshops. If you have any further suggestions regarding these events or any area of our waste reduction efforts, please don't hesitate to get in touch!

Good Food Fund:

The Good Food Fund is our project to help people in the community who find themselves in the desperate situation of needing emergency food aid.

Our model uses cash donations to provide fresh food and store cupboard staples to those in need. This means rather than supermarkets profiting from people buying for food banks we can use our position as a retailer/wholesaler to take away the margin and make cash donations go further.

Over the last year we have worked with The Space in Govanhill to get mixed boxes of food to those in need. The space mix a cookery workshop format with the distribution of the food. Other key partners include the Night Shelter, Lodging House Mission, Galgael and Marie Trust.

Plan for the year ahead:

In the year ahead we will continue the same work with our existing partners and look to extend that as the monetary value of the fund increases.

