

# Bridport Town Council

## Environment Committee - Food Security Plan Actions

### **Background**

Bridport Town Council's [Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan 2023-2025](#) acknowledges the disruptive impacts climate change is having on the food and ecological systems that we all depend on. It also recognises the cumulative effects these changes are having on human health, well-being, and the cost of living. The development of a Food Security Plan (FSP) for the Bridport area is a collective effort to increase understanding of the complex web of interrelated issues and propose a roadmap towards a more sustainable food production and distribution system that will benefit the entire community.

The FSP envisions a localised food economy, emphasising agroecological practices and short food supply chains as solutions beneficial to the environment, soil health, consumers, and the economy. It makes the case that aligning food production with ecological harmony would not only mitigate the impact of shocks to the food system but foster healthier outcomes for people and the planet.

Environment Committee endorsed the Bridport FSP in March 2024 and agreed to undertake further consultation to develop a detailed action plan for the FSP. Implicit in the consultation was a recognition that delivery of the Bridport FSP would require co-ordinated input from a wide range of stakeholders.

This paper sets out the feedback from consultations (see Appendix 1) and presents a series of actions, proposed by partner organisations, that will accelerate transition to a more sustainable local food system. Securing the endorsement by the Town Council for FSP actions will help increase visibility and support for a rapid transition.

## A revised Bridport Food Security Action Plan.

As a result of the feedback received, we are proposing a reduced but focused food security action plan that better reflects the ambitions and activities of landowners, farmers and local food organisations.

The development of the Brit Valley Landscape Recovery Project offers a huge opportunity to accelerate transition to a more sustainable local food system, one that includes re-focusing on local markets – providing fresh, healthy and sustainable food at affordable prices for the Bridport community.

<b>Changing Diets</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>
<b>Public awareness of healthy food and local availability</b>	
A sustained public awareness campaign through social media, local newspapers, and community events, such as Bridport Food Festival, highlighting the health and environmental benefits of seasonal and plant-based diets.	BFM
Be active members of the Sustainable Food Partnership network, taking a systems approach to drive a fundamental shift in local food systems and support a rapidly growing good food movement of engaged citizens.	BFM BTC
Establish a Community Food Hub to serve the Bridport Area running educational programmes and workshops focused on seasonal eating, nutrition, and cooking skills to empower residents to make healthier dietary choices.	BFM
Educational support for nutrition and health for children and young people creating a bridge from pre-school to higher education plus.	BFM
<b>Increasing production</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>
<b>Support for new horticultural start ups</b>	
Explore potential of a mentorship or 'buddy' programme and longer-term Brit Valley Project hub 'surgeries' - drop in advice sessions to create networks supporting horticultural growing through insights and guidance.	BVP WDW
Explore potential land offering by Brit Valley Project Partners for horticultural production. Exploring potential for CSA within the project area. Matching tenants to landowners.	BVP
Promote growing at home/ in allotments / in community settings.	BFM BTC
Support creation of demonstration farms or model horticultural plots where best practices are showcased to provide practical learning experiences and inspiration for growers.	BVP

Establish educational programmes or workshops on agroecological farming practices in collaboration with local agricultural experts and organisations.	FPF TF BVP
Develop a local food hub that aggregate produce from multiple farmers, making it convenient for consumers to access a variety of local products in one place.	BFM
<b>Increasing Climate Resilience – programmes for building biodiversity, soil and water management</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>
Encourage farmers to diversify crops to increase resilience to climate variability and reduce the risk of multi-crop failures.	BVP
Provide agricultural extension services to educate farmers on climate-resilient crop choices and best practices.	BVP
Implement near-term water management initiatives, including rainwater harvesting, efficient irrigation systems, and strategies to mitigate water runoff.	BVP
Support farmers in adopting water-smart practices, optimising water use for crop production.	BVP
Support research into integrated pest management strategies, which focus on biological control methods and reduced pesticide use	BVP
Offer incentives for implementing methods that manage any changing pest and disease dynamics under climate change while preserving beneficial insect populations and reducing soil degradation.	BVP
Collaborate with environmental agencies and farmers to develop networks for manure management and redistribution across the area.	BVP

### **Partners**

BTC – Bridport Town Council	BFM – Bridport Food Matters CIO
BVP – Brit Valley Landscape Recovery Project	WDW – West Dorset Wilding
FPF – Fivepenny Farm Land Skills Hub	TF – Tamarisk Farm

Actions supported by the Brit Valley Project are indicative at present as the Project is still in development. Conversations with its Project Partners will determine the level of participation and support the project will be able to provide from the start of the project implementation in 2026. All plans are subject to final approval from both PPs and Defra.

## Appendix 1 - Consultation Feedback

Whilst only a limited number of organisations provided detailed contributions to the call for food security actions, the input we did receive were detailed and well considered. Here is a summary of the responses we received during the consultation:

<p><b>Brit Valley Project feedback from landowners/ farmers:</b></p> <p>Emphasised importance of ‘good food’ ie quality as well as quantity, food health and nutritional security, and the need for policy change to support local availability of affordable ‘good food’</p> <p>Producing healthy food is front and centre. Food production and environmental and ecological regeneration have to work together, not either /or.</p> <p>Selling to local markets/direct to the public builds connection to the community, and can boost the status and self-esteem of local producers.</p> <p>Some disadvantages of selling locally include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty over size and reliability of local markets.</li> <li>• More time consuming</li> <li>• More admin, red tape involved for producers</li> <li>• Takes more time for consumers to shop and prepare unprocessed food.</li> <li>• Selling fresh food requires fast distribution and sales.</li> <li>• Selling processed food (e.g. cured meats, preserves, dried or milled grains) requires infrastructure, packaging, marketing.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Potential for the Brit Valley Project to contribute</b> to the Bridport Food Security Plan and local food security:</p> <p><b>Immediate.</b> Project Partners and/or Team member to contribute to Food Security meetings</p> <p><b>Near term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share Project Partners' insights, expertise, contribute to local food and farming conversations, offer/ contribute to field visits, talks, events for local food producers and wider community.</li> <li>• Explore potential amongst Project Partners for long-term leases for horticultural growers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Longer term:</b> currently exploring a business case for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A physical Brit Valley Project Hub. Very early days but the Hub has potential to contribute to local food security via</li> <li>• A multigenerational environmental education space for farmers, land managers, other local producers, students and the wider community</li> <li>• Community engagement space and programme of educational and inspirational activities and events.</li> <li>• Opportunities for connection and collaboration, sharing resources, building local networks - links to Bridport Community Food Hub and BTC’s proposed College for Regenerative Practice, outreach to</li> </ul>
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	<p>other local education centres (inc. Discover Farming, Kingston Maurward)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection, processing and distribution centre for Brit Valley Brand produce.</li> <li>• Shared storage and equipment share / hire</li> <li>• A Brit Valley Produce quality assured brand – allowing our Project Partners to collectively market, process, package and distribute nature positive local.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BFM</b>  <i>A community hub promoting access to nutritious food for all, forever.</i>  <u>Role:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communications &amp; information – E-News, Website, social media</li> <li>- Networking, education &amp; engagement – events, visuals</li> <li>- Partnerships – project delivery &amp; support</li> </ul> <p>‘Umbrella’ role – help give visibility and make connections/ linking</p>	<p><b>BFM</b>  Demand from the Hub (venue A) for small-scale horticulture produce</p> <p>Encourage more growing of vegetables and fruits locally, including more people to grow at home</p> <p>BFM support educational programmes</p> <p>BFM work with some farmers to increase direct supply to Bridport area, especially with smaller-scale agro-ecological producers including market gardeners.</p>
<p><b>BFM</b>  <b>COMMUNITY HUB</b>  <i>(virtual &amp; venue A: public facing)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information &amp; communications</li> <li>- talks, demonstrations, workshops</li> <li>- networking/meeting spaces (community groups, farmers, etc.)</li> <li>- café – seasonal, local, pay it forward</li> <li>- eating together; volunteers prepare and share</li> <li>- pantry/ shop – local, seasonal, wonky, grow-a-row</li> <li>- advisory service for small food businesses? (in Hub space...)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Five Penny Farm – Land Skill Hub</b>  Establish educational programmes or workshops on agroecological farming practices in collaboration with local agricultural experts and organisations.</p>	<p><b>Tamarisk Farm</b>  Establish educational programmes or workshops on agroecological farming practices in collaboration with local agricultural experts and organisations.</p>

