



Chairman's Report March 2011

Inspired by an article in the Sunday Times [by John-Paul Flintoff](#) in April 2009, Food4Macc has grown swiftly from a first public meeting in September 2009. Today we are recognised by HMRC as a [properly constituted](#) charitable organisation with these stated aims:-

1. Encourage the growing of food at home, in allotments, on borrowed land, public spaces, and local farms.
2. Support local food producers and those who sell or distribute local produce
3. Raise awareness of the consequences of Peak Oil on our food prices.
4. Increase co-operation between groups working on different facets of the Climate Change and Peak Oil problems.

So how are we doing? I give you the bare facts here, leaving you to click around on our website www.Food4Macc.org to see the detail.

1. Encourage the growing of food at home, in allotments, on borrowed land, public spaces, and local farms.

We have established [six community gardens](#) around Macclesfield and demonstrated how much food can be grown in a small area. The Rowans won Garden Answers Magazine's "[Community garden of the month](#)".

Unable to increase the number of allotments available in Macclesfield, we instead started a [Garden Share](#) scheme which has established 7 shares between householders and gardeners.

We started a series of talks on topics to support gardeners at our monthly meetings, and we are extending that this year with a [programme of ten talks](#).

2. Support local food producers and those who sell or distribute local produce

We have published a Google map of [local food producers](#), egg sellers, farm shops, farmers markets, local bakers and butchers.

We were invited to speak at the local NFU AGM, and Tim Shercliff has made great progress in establishing [Food4Macc Direct](#) as a way of helping local farms market their produce directly to the community.

3. Raise awareness of the consequences of Peak Oil on our food prices.

In addition to our own monthly meetings Deb has done radio interviews with Silk, Canalside, and Redline Radio at Crewe. We have had press coverage from the Macclesfield Express, [Cheshire Life](#), and local websites.

We have been invited to speak to both Macclesfield Rotary clubs, Macclesfield Guild, and WI. Other local sustainability groups have asked us to share our "experience" and we have done talks for Low Carbon Lymm and Transition Wilmslow.

Most recently we were able to address the Cheshire Volunteer Service Conference attended by several councillors, and the Cheshire Peaks and Plains Residents Conference.

The website provides a lot of background information about food growing and attracts about 15 hits per day.

We have built up a e-mailing list of 200 people, and are starting to experiment with Twitter.

Promotional materials include T shirts, car stickers and a [library](#) of posters and flyers on the website.

Stalls at the Middlewood Way fair, Poynton Show, Prestbury Show, Beech hall school and of course the Treacle Market have all helped raise awareness.

In November, Silk 106.9fm listeners voted Food4Macc “Social Enterprise of the Year” in their [Local Hero awards](#).

4. Increase co-operation between groups working on different facets of the Climate Change and Peak Oil problems.

We have good connections with Transition Buxton, Incredible Edible Todmorden, Bollington Carbon Revolution, and have been involved in a number of Cheshire East sustainability events.

Our website offers links to [all the local sustainability groups](#).

We successfully spawned a parent Transition Town Movement www.Macc2020.org which has another six sustainability working groups - besides food!

5. Although funding is not itself a stated aim, it has been a key enabler.

Guided by the CVS we have been successful in raising close to £4000 so far from sources which are detailed in the Treasurer’s report – next.

6. Organisation

Food4Macc has an elected committee that meets between each of the monthly public meetings. The meetings are also attended by project leaders from the community gardens, and leaders of the Garden Share and Food4Macc Direct projects. The members of this group and their roles are listed on the [Contacts page](#) of the website. Food4Macc is still at a formative stage, not bound by years of precedent, so any input from other members is always welcomed.

All the above has been achieved by the efforts of a core of volunteers. Sometimes braving all weathers, not just in gardening, but in manning car boot sale stalls and the like, and other times being able to keep warm manning the phones, maintaining the accounts, composing letters, emails and grant applications.

It is the strength of that teamwork that is perhaps Food4Macc’s best measure.

Colin Townend

11.3.2011