

Food

York Quakers meet the challenges of sustainability
A Report by the Sustainability Group

Whether we love cooking or spend as little time in the kitchen as possible, F/friends in York Area Meeting share a concern that the food we eat is sustainable.

Shopping

Here are some of the changes that people are making to their diet and food shopping:

- Reducing the amount eaten but maintaining variety in their diet.
- Cutting out meat – ranging from lifelong vegetarian, to mostly no meat, to some meat-free days, to working on cutting down on meat.
- Cutting out dairy – ranging from exploring a vegan diet, to cutting down on cheese, to using less milk, to unsure about becoming vegan.
- Buying food grown locally and organically and sold loose, where this is available, or from specialist organic delivery firms.
- Cooking from scratch and avoiding food that is highly processed.
- Planning meals to prevent food waste...and composting unavoidable waste.
- Growing your own, in gardens and community allotments, and making use of fruit growing wild.

Dilemmas

But making decisions about diet and food sourcing seems to be riddled with dilemmas – here are just a few of them:

- What is an ethical, sustainable diet? Balancing food miles, farming methods, carbon footprint, benefit/cost to the environment, benefit/cost to poorer countries, plastic used...help!
- Unavoidable dietary restrictions make a fully vegetarian or vegan diet almost impossible for some people, and others are concerned how to stay healthy if they go vegan.
- Busy lives, limited transport options, and tight budgets make sourcing sustainably grown produce hard for many people.

- Different views on food in the household, among Quakers and non-Quakers, make decisions more complicated.
- Bananas don't grow in Yorkshire...yet.

Advice And some encouragement to make changes to our diets that F/friends have offered:

- Cutting down on meat has led to feeling healthier.
- It's been easier than expected to cut down on some foods...but not bananas.

“ ” In F/friends' own words:

'We both eat much less meat. Red meat x1/week. Chicken x1/week. Fish x1/week and the rest of times vegetarian. We feel healthier for doing this.'

'Almost always it costs a lot of money and I am acutely aware that I can afford to. How many can?'

'Growing food and gardening is an act of rebellion at a time of little hope for the future.'

Prepared by:
York Area Meeting Sustainability Group
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