

Food Share Network

Executive Summary



Nicki Souter
ASSOCIATES

Introduction

Zero Waste Perth is a consortium made up of Perth & Kinross Council, Beautiful Perth and EcoTechnic Perth College UHI funded until March 2020 by Zero Waste Scotland's Zero Waste Town Development Fund. This project is delivering a range of food waste prevention, re-use and repair, recycling, resource efficiency and circular economy activities to make North Perth Scotland's first Zero Waste City.

In 2019 as part of the project Zero Waste Perth commissioned Nicki Souter Associates to explore the potential to establish a Food Share Network to redistribute surplus food from food businesses to communities experiencing food insecurity.

Although the remit of the Zero Waste Perth project was initially limited to Wards 11 and 12, the Food Share Network element of the project was expanded to include communities across the Perth & Kinross Council area.



Research Activities

To develop the Food Share Network extensive research was carried out to understand both the community demand for surplus food and the potential suppliers of the surplus food.

Community Demand

- A desktop exercise to identify the range of existing surplus food share mechanisms operating in Scotland, the UK and worldwide.
 - Identification of the key communities who would benefit from a Food Share Network across Perth and Kinross based on ACORN classifications 4 and 5 and identified as people who were facing food insecurity issues.
 - Identification of existing community food share projects and activities in Perth and Kinross.
- Interviews with key stakeholders including community workers, community link workers, local social enterprises, and community groups and organisations took place in ten communities across Perth and Kinross. These were used to more fully understand how each community could benefit from the Network, and to learn about the existing food share activities taking place.
 - Eight Focus Groups were run with community members in 7 areas across Perth and Kinross who were experiencing food insecurity. These groups explored how a Food Share Network would best support their individual communities. These groups explored opinions on various food share mechanisms including food banks, community cafés, community feasts, fridges and larders, pre-prepared meals including ‘meals to go’ and recipe bags, cooking classes, food share apps, and surplus food supermarkets.
 - Visits to exemplar food sharing projects out-with Perth and Kinross.

Key

- 1 Blairgowrie
- 2 Crieff
- 3 Letham
- 4 North Muirton
- 5 Coupar Angus
- 6 Aberfeldy
- 7 Pitlochry
- 8 Kinloch Rannoch
- 9 St Madoes
- 10 Alyth

Map showing target communities for The Food Share Network.



Surplus Food Supply

Interviews were carried out with potential surplus food suppliers including redistribution organisations, wholesalers, supermarkets, producers and retailers. These were used to identify the range, types and quantities of surplus food available, the re-distribution mechanisms, existing community partnerships and the willingness to be part of the Food Share Network.

Funding

25 local, regional and national funding sources for capital, revenue and core costs were identified. These could be used as part of an integrated funding strategy to support communities across Perth and Kinross to run sustainable projects as part of the Food Share Network.

In addition, Perth & Kinross Council disburse grants through two recurring annual funds; the Community Food Fund (£50,000), and Food Insecurity in Holiday Periods Fund (£50,000), with the potential to merge these into a single Community Food Fund.

5

Redistribution Organisations
and Wholesalers

37

Supermarkets
Local and National

42

Producers and Retailers

6

Bakery

12

Meat and Fish

24

Fruit and Vegetables

Recommendations

Community Demand

There is a significant community demand for a Food Share Network to help tackle food insecurity. This network should seek to support and further develop existing community food share activities and projects, and help communities to set up new projects across Perth and Kinross.

Surplus Food Supply

There are a range of existing re-distribution organisations, producers and retailers who are already redistributing surplus food to communities at both the local and national level, with the potential to increase this supply to support the development of the Food Share Network.

The Perth and Kinross Food Share Network

The Food Share Network should be community led, and supported by Perth & Kinross Council as part of the Perth and Kinross Offer. This 'Offer' is a new way of working to ensure that public services are shaped, designed and delivered with colleagues, citizens, communities, partners and stakeholders where 'Everybody's Voice has an equal weight'.

The Perth & Kinross Council Offer to support the Food Share Network could be:

- Recruitment of a Community Food Co-ordinator
- Administration of the Community Food Fund
- Assistance with the implementation of the Funding Strategy
- Support with community funding applications
- Community Asset Transfer support
- Food safety and hygiene advice and regulation support
- Support for established and new community organisations to develop food share projects





The Food Share Network Model

Community cafés, fridges and larders all provide a more social community focused environment, and offer a more dignified solution to food insecurity which can help to overcome stigma often associated with more traditional food sharing mechanisms, such as food banks.

Community cafés were the preferred method identified by communities across Perth and Kinross to help to address local food insecurity issues. These community spaces could provide access to affordable fresh, chilled and frozen good quality surplus food provided loose, pre-prepared for consumption in the café, or pre-prepared 'meals to go' or in recipe bags to be eaten and/or cooked at home. Food could be purchased at a reduced price or on a pay-as-you-feel basis.

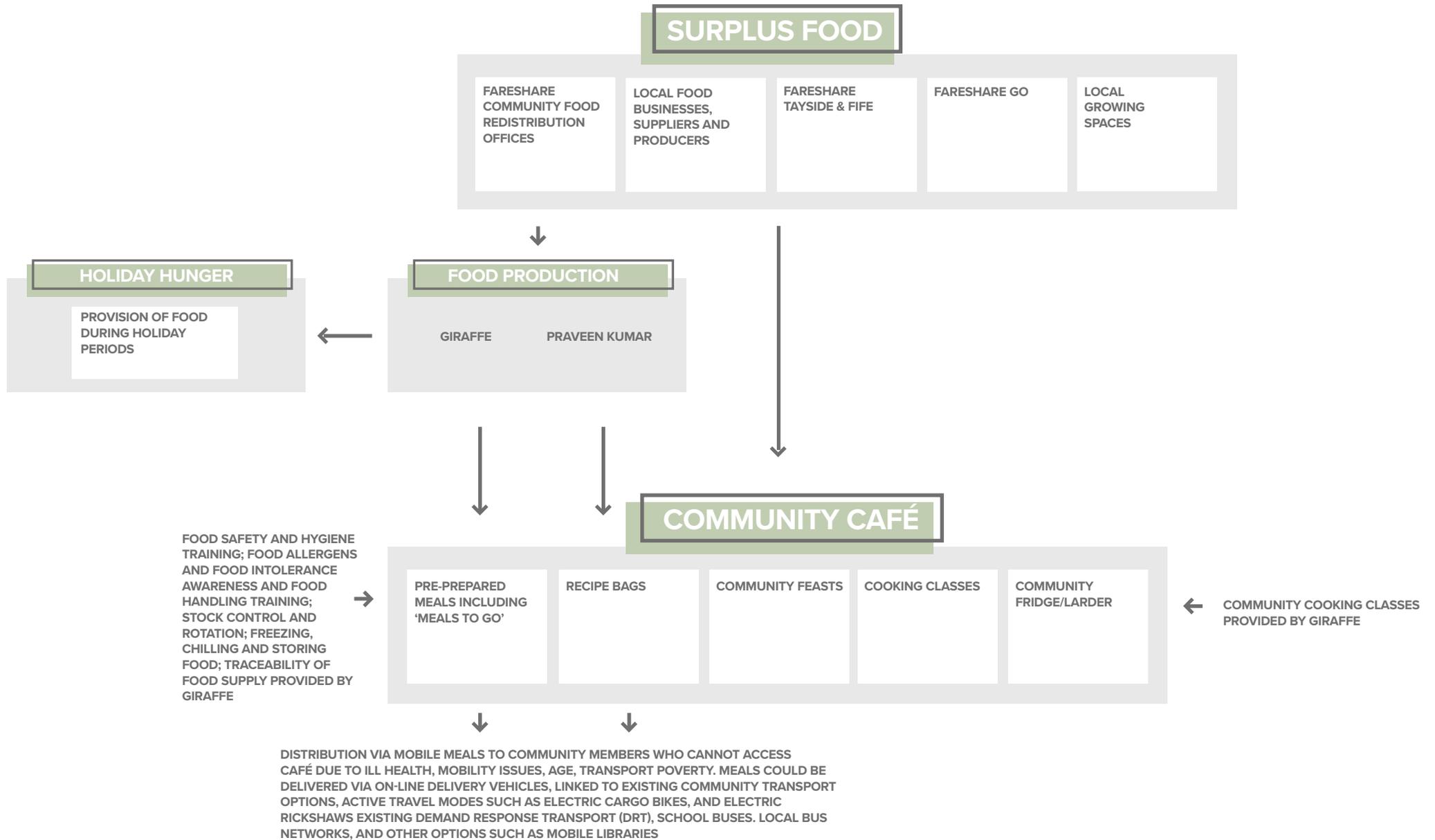
These cafés could include community fridges and/or larders which could provide local 'food bank' functions but in a more dignified and socially inclusive way. The cafés could also be used to support other food sharing activities including community cooking classes, community feasts, and supporting holiday hunger activities.

Fridges could be stocked with any surplus food from the café operations, as well as pre-prepared meals including 'meals to go' and recipe bags, and other surplus food items received that require refrigeration.

Larders could provide access to low-cost food staples, such as pasta, rice, potatoes, and when possible, fresh fruit and vegetables. Larders could also provide other items that community members may struggle to afford such as sanitary, dental hygiene and cleaning products.

Different approaches can be used to manage community access to fridges and larders with exemplar mechanisms including adopting a membership based approach using a small annual membership fee and then at any visit members pay a small fee to access ten items weighted by value, or by operating an "open-to-all" approach with a pricing structure for example, any 5 items for £1.

The Food Share Network Model



In The Heart of the Community

In addition to helping to alleviate food poverty, cafés could act as Community Hubs which provide welcoming spaces to help alleviate issues of social isolation, and support communities to access other sources of advice and information.

Locating the cafés within the heart of each community, ensuring there are cooking facilities, eating spaces and areas where other activities could take place, and making best use of existing buildings were also identified as being important considerations by communities. The café opening hours will need to reflect the needs of the individual communities and suggestions included afternoons, and early evenings, school holidays, during the winter months, and during the day for elderly residents and for people with young families.

Community Volunteers

The community cafés could be run using a combination of a café manager and chef (paid positions) and a bank of community volunteers. Community members could be encouraged to become volunteers by engaging them in initial community activities linked to the Food Share Network such as community feasts, café launch events, and community cooking classes.

Volunteers could also be sourced from other local organisations such as Perth College, local churches, PKAVS and the Corbenic Camphill Community, or by linking the volunteering activities to national awards and schemes such as the Saltire Awards, the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, Young Scot and Scouts Scotland.

Companies and local businesses could also be encouraged to send volunteers to support local community cafés. These volunteers could provide business, funding and administration support as well as getting involved in the day to day running of the community cafés.

The social enterprise company Giraffe could provide training to all staff and volunteers involved in the preparation, cooking and serving of food. As well as ensuring that the cafés are managed and run safely and effectively this will help to develop confidence and new skills for the volunteers.

Training should include:

- Food safety and hygiene
- Food allergens and food intolerance awareness
- Food handling; stock control and rotation
- Freezing, chilling and storing food
- Traceability of food supply.

Meals and Recipe Bags to Go

Surplus food could be used to prepare healthy, hearty and nutritious pre-prepared meals including 'meals to go'. These could be fresh, chilled or frozen meals for people to take away and re-heat at home, or provided as recipe bags with recipes included for people to cook and prepare at home. These could be sold at the point of sale in cafés, or used to stock the community fridges.

These could be prepared by individual cafés or prepared by the Social Enterprise Giraffe and a local food business owner Praveen Kumar– both have expressed interest in producing these products. Surplus food could be supplied directly to them by a range of local and national sources including the FareShare Community Food Redistribution Office who can provide larger volumes of food if storage facilities are sufficient.

Having the ability to also distribute these meals and recipe bags to community members who might be unable to access the café due to ill health, mobility issues, age, and transport poverty was also identified as being very important. Meals could be delivered using a range of options including on-line delivery vehicles, using existing community transport options including Demand Response Transport (DRT), school buses, local bus networks, mobile libraries, and using active travel modes such as electric cargo bikes and electric rickshaws.



Cooking Classes

Cooking classes could be run in the community cafés, with sessions for children and adults during school holidays and at weekends.

Classes for children could cover basic food preparation and cooking skills, as well as the importance of eating a healthy, balanced diet. Classes for adults could focus on feeding a family on a budget, cooking healthy meals on a budget and learning how to cook different cuisines.

Communities want to learn how to cook healthy, hearty, simple, affordable meals. Further discussions are taking place with communities to understand the range and types of food they would like to learn how to cook, and how these could best be delivered within the individual communities. Ideas already suggested include pasta dishes, stews, and soups, mince and tatties.

Staff and volunteers from the community cafés could work with Giraffe to develop simple, affordable, healthy recipes and cooking classes that could be taught at the community cafés. Cooking class attendees could be provided with recipe cards and ingredients to allow them to recreate these meals at home to help further build cooking confidence.

Giraffe could also provide cooking classes to local businesses where companies would pay to come and take part to learn how to cook on very limited budgets using surplus food to help build better understanding of the challenges faced by food insecurity. These classes could also be used to canvas for volunteers from the corporate sector.

Community Feasts

Community cafés could also host community feasts at times of the year when food insecurity affects the most people, for example, during January and school holidays. Members of the community would be invited to help with the preparation of the food, under the guidance and supervision of the café staff and volunteers. Once the food was prepared cafés would be opened to the whole community to enjoy the shared meal.

The Food Share Network Pilot Projects

It is recommended that two pilot projects are run in one urban and one rural location. This will help to demonstrate the flexibility of the food share network model and the different elements that can be implemented according to specific community needs.

Pilot Project 1: Letham

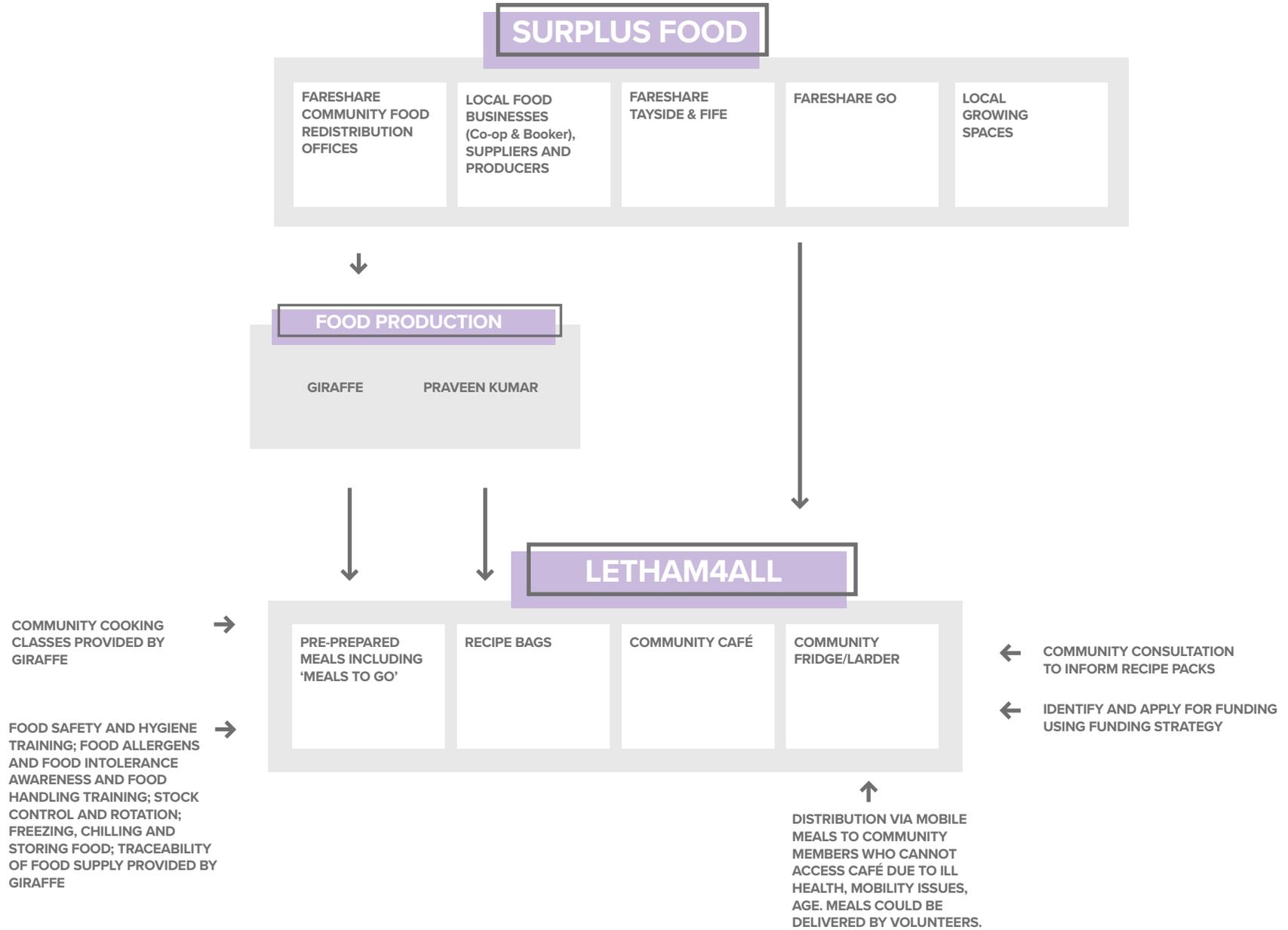
Letham4All is a community group who has taken over the running of the local community centre. They already engage in food share activities including a weekly “blether and a butty”, a monthly soup and sandwich event, are currently operating a small community larder and have recently bought a community fridge. They have already recruited REHIS trained volunteers to manage the fridge when it arrives.

Zero Waste Perth will assist Letham4All to achieve its short-term goal of setting up a community fridge, with a longer term goal of establishing a community café.

The Food Share Network could provide the following support activities:

1. Giraffe could provide health and safety and food safety training to existing and new staff, and volunteers. This will ensure that all volunteers are qualified to work in the community café and are confident about the handling and preparation of food.
2. Consultation should take place with the community to identify the types of meals they would like to cook and eat. Giraffe can use this information to prepare recipes and source ingredients to run cooking classes to upskill the community to cook their favourite meals.
3. Giraffe and Praveen Kumar can provide a supply of pre-prepared meals including ‘meals to go’, and recipe bags that the community café can sell and serve, and use to stock the community fridge provided by Zero Waste Perth.
4. Although the community group proactively fund raise, they should work with the Council to apply for further funding to help develop the café using the Food Share Network Funding Strategy.





Pilot Project 2: Kinloch Rannoch

Kinloch Rannoch Primary School hope to implement a grounds development programme called the “Roost at Rannoch”.

This is being developed in four phases:

- **Phase 1** supporting the development of a tree house, vegetable shack, polytunnel, raised beds and general seating areas.
- **Phase 2** comprises the redevelopment of the nursery garden.
- **Phase 3** includes creation of an eco-pod as a main community meeting area – this would include sustainable energy sources including solar panels, wind turbine and an electric car charging point. This would have a kitchen and seating space.
- **Phase 4** is the development of a sensory pathway that links the different areas at the Roost.

To help the school achieve its goal the Food Share Network could help by:

- Support the establishment of the polytunnel.
- Identifying potential funding sources for the eco-pod.

The Food Share Network will support the Kinloch Rannoch Community to:

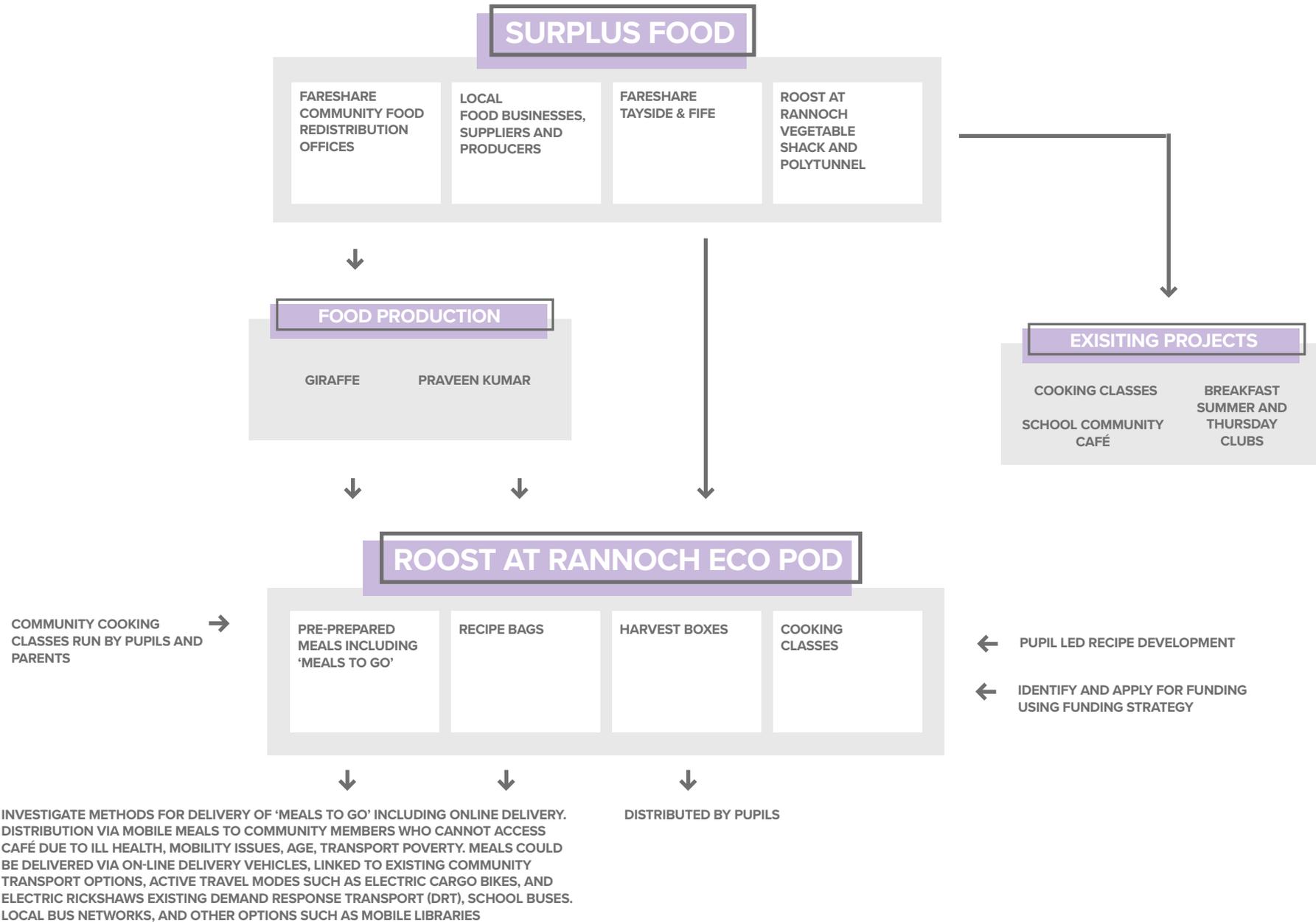
- Carry out further community consultation to develop the Food Share Model.
- Assist with identifying property options within Kinloch Rannoch to accommodate Food Share mechanisms.
- Enabling pupils and community members to make pre-prepared meals, including ‘meals to go’ or recipe bags either at Kinloch Rannoch Primary School, the Community Centre or the Outdoor Centre. Or these could be purchased from Giraffe.

These pre-prepared meals and recipe bags could be used to supply and expand existing food share activities happening in the community which includes:

- Harvest boxes,
- Weekly cooking classes,
- Breakfast club,
- Summer clubs,
- School community café to be run once a month between 4 - 6,
- Thursday club at the Community Centre.
- Investigating whether Fareshare would deliver to Kinloch Rannoch.

- Sourcing other local suppliers of surplus food.
- Enabling surplus food and meals to be distributed to community members who are unable to access the cafés etc. due to ill health, mobility issues, age, and transport poverty.
- Investigate methods for delivery of pre-prepared ‘meals to go’ including online delivery. Exploring whether meals could be delivered using a range of options including on-line delivery vehicles, using existing community transport options, active travel modes such as electric cargo bikes, and electric rickshaws, existing Demand Response Transport (DRT), school buses, local bus networks, and other options such as mobile libraries.





The Food Share Network – Supporting Activities

How to Guide

It is recommended that a 'How To' guide is produced that provides step by step guidance for community groups or organisations that wish to set up food sharing mechanisms.

This would include the following information:

- Sources of funding to allow the establishment of a food sharing venue.
- Staff and volunteer resources required to ensure the enterprise is run effectively.
- Health and safety requirements that must be adhered to when handling food, including a focus on allergens, food intolerances, food handling, stock control and rotation, freezing, chilling, storing and the traceability of food supply.

- Signposting to existing resources that explain how to set up and run community food share mechanisms.
- Contact details of exemplar food sharing projects that can be approached for advice and guidance.
- How to source surplus food, including contact details of community organisations who are able to provide pre-prepared meals including 'meals to go' and recipe bags.
- How to recruit, and sources of training, for volunteers.

Brand Development

It is recommended that a strong, easily identifiable and inspiring brand should be developed for the Food Share Network that can be used on all collateral including the café buildings, the pre-prepared meals packaging, menus, guidance documents and all promotional materials.

This will help to build confidence in the network, establish it as a source of high quality, affordable food, provide food-related support as well as destigmatising the use of surplus food.

Governance Structure

A governance structure for the Food Share Network should be developed to include representatives from:

- Perth & Kinross Council.
- Surplus food suppliers such as Fareshare and individual retailers, suppliers and producers.
- Community network members such as Letham4All, Giraffe, Forward Coupar Angus and Kinloch Rannoch Primary School.





Nicki Souter
ASSOCIATES