

LOCAL FOOD LINKS

ANNUAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2018 - AUGUST 2019



Fresh, Healthy, Tasty School Meals



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Parent/Carer Feedback...

"My daughter has just started preschool and I thought I'd try her with hot lunches. She loved it!!! So lovely to know she's getting a well-balanced and filling meal to fuel her learning. Thank you."





Chair's Report

I would like to start by thanking all my fellow Non Executive Directors for their continued support over the last 12 months which was my third year as Chair of Local Food Links.

The Non Executive Directors have a very wide range of business skills and experience. As a result, we have a strong Board who are able to provide guidance and advice when needed.

We also have a very skilled operational team who run LFL on a day-to-day basis and I would like to thank them for all their continuing hard work.

The most significant event of the year was opening a brand new kitchen on the Link Park Estate in Weymouth. This is our first ever purpose built kitchen in a brand new industrial unit. There was a huge amount of hard work in getting the kitchen up and running and I would like to thank our Chief Executive, Caroline Morgan, for everything she did to make this happen – read more in her report. From Day 1 the Weymouth kitchen began supplying 1,250 meals to 14 schools every school day!

We now have 4 hubs in Bridport, Blandford, Shillingstone, and Weymouth who cooked a phenomenal 190,045 freshly prepared, nutritious school meals over the year!

This year has been a year of considerable growth for LFL and I can only see a very positive future for the company. Like most businesses, we don't know what Brexit has in store for us but I'm sure we will be able to successfully manage the outcome.

Mike Henderson, Chair

In June Mike Henderson went back to the floor when he spent the day in the Weymouth kitchen. Pictured here, he is helping the team prepare mini shortbread biscuits.



Chief Executive's Report



The beginning of the academic year 2018/2019 was challenging in many ways and highlighted the fact that Local Food Links is made up of teams of dedicated and hardworking staff.

It had become clear before the end of the Summer Term that the new Weymouth Kitchen would not be ready for the start of the academic year in September 2018. A contingency plan was formed which involved the new Weymouth Team being split into three parts. One third of the staff moved into Bridport, one third went to Blandford and the rest went to a rented kitchen in Grimstone (owned by our Butcher, Colin Clark). Space was at a premium in all 3 locations, driving routes become protracted and working hours were stretched. This continued for the entire first half of term with the new Kitchen eventually opening on 29th October 2018. LFL started working with 15 new schools in September 2018 so the increase in numbers across the board was considerable and all staff were working very hard anyway, without the complication of the contingency plan.

One of the Bridport Team commented that the 8 weeks contingency plan “was the hardest I have experienced at LFL and it was also the most rewarding as the team really pulled together.” And that was certainly how I felt – truly grateful to all the staff for their endless kindness and good humour as well as ensuring that the new schools received their meals every day. When I had my first meeting with the Dorchester Headteachers, they told me that they would not have known that anything was different and were impressed with the quality of food and level of service from Day One.

I was convinced that good communication was going to be essential during the contingency period and started a weekly Staff Newsletter. During September, we were lucky enough to recruit Natasha Elliott as our new Marketing Officer and she took over from me in Week 3 and the Staff Newsletter is now a weekly feature of life at LFL and Tash has made it look very professional.

We participated in National School Meals Week in November 2018 and all caterers were encouraged to “invite your local MP in for a school meal” and we did! Oliver Letwin joined us at Damers First School in Dorchester and Simon Hoare came to Downlands Primary School on Blandford Army Camp. Both of our local MPs enjoyed their meals and were very happy to sit and chat with the pupils.

Once the dust had settled and the Weymouth Team were established in their new home, we reflected and felt suitably proud of what the entire team had achieved. We put our name forward for several awards, including the “Scale Up” Award for the Federation of Small



Businesses – which we won in the South West and therefore went through to the National Finals. There were over 2,000 entries which resulted in only 120 finalists and it was a good opportunity to share our experience and find out about a great variety of excellent local businesses.

We were shortlisted as a Finalist in the Cost Sector Catering Awards, Education Award Category, and also had an article featured in the March issue of the magazine:

<https://secure.viewer.zmags.com/publication/1a60d268#/1a60d268/1>

In November 2018, a workshop day “Scaling and Building Resilience” was organised with Resonance Ltd to help LFL to focus on the future. A core team of 5 (Barry Dovell, Linda Newman, Suzie King, Jayne Fry and me) now meet termly to re-examine the Business Plan and to identify what actions could be taken to increase sales and income, to review pricing, reduce costs and increase efficiency. The ideas are mapped and presented to the Board of Directors every few months.



Two schools announced their departure during the year – Dorchester Middle School decided to revert to packed lunches only in September 2018 and then brought the contract to an end in July 2019. St Michael's Primary School in Lyme Regis plan to take their hot meals service in house in November 2019. We wish both schools all the very best for the future.

Chris Plowman-Hart represented LFL once again in the annual School Chef of the Year Competition. Chris and Barry went to the Regional Finals in Weston-super-Mare in January and Chris impressed the judges and his fellow competitors with the quality of his dishes. We are very proud of his achievements and grateful to him for all his efforts.

The Blandford Kitchen celebrated its 10th Anniversary in February 2019. Jayne Fry and Tracy Dawson have been there since the kitchen opened and have created something special – the Blandford Kitchen is recommended by schools for the quality of the food and the extra effort the team will always put into ensuring the pupils are happy. The occasion was marked by an afternoon tea with a birthday cake and several schools and the local press came to celebrate. Lots of schools sent cards and messages to say congratulations and thank you.

Ashley Painter, Bridport Kitchen Manager, was a finalist in the BBC Cook of the Year Category in the BBC Food and Farming Awards 2019. The two judges, Jeanette Orrey and Paula McIntyre visited the Bridport Kitchen and Salway Ash Primary School with Ashley and we all had an opportunity to say that we think he is brilliant cook and an excellent manager. Ashley, his wife and parents, had a lovely



Parent/Carer Feedback...

“My daughter has just said, ‘That’s the best lunch ever!’ She’s looking forward to 12 o’clock already!”



evening at the awards ceremony in Bristol in June. Ashley didn't win the award on the night but, as far as we are concerned, he is very much a winner and we are incredibly proud of him.

Having experienced the challenges associated with 15 new schools and a brand new kitchen, I assured everyone that 2019/2020 would be a year of consolidation and that I was not looking to take on any new contracts. However, as the summer term progressed, more and more schools started to make enquiries about capacity out of our new hub and in our other kitchens and we realised that another busy summer of equipment purchasing and installation lay ahead. The plan is now to take on 8 additional schools in September 2019 (5 of which are in Weymouth).

The new Weymouth Hub has a gluten free preparation room which has meant that all gluten free products can now be produced in house, something which means even more control over the meals we can provide for pupils with certain allergies.

Last year was anything but dull – the challenges of the contingency plan, the awards success and the pleasure of working with so many new schools ensured we were continually busy. I asked Gary Spracklen, Headteacher at The Prince of Wales First School in Dorchester, to provide a reference for one of the awards and his words sum up our aims very well:

*"Local Food Links has supplied hot meals to The Prince of Wales School for many years now and through this time we have seen them grow whilst retaining their distinctive culture and ethos that first attracted us to them. **Put simply, Local Food Links consistently provides delicious food to our pupils that they all absolutely love!**"*

Thank you Team LFL for all that you do and for making my job an honour and a privilege. Thank you to our Board of Directors for their expertise and guidance and to Mike, our Chair, for being an excellent sounding board and mentor.

Caroline Morgan, Chief Executive.



Parent/Carer Feedback...

"My kids love the hot lunches, good healthy food"



Bridport Kitchen



It has been a happy and very busy year for us at the Bridport kitchen and the team have been fantastic!

The Autumn term began with us fostering some of the new Weymouth team until the new kitchen was completed. Both teams did an amazing job of adjusting to unexpected and challenging working conditions and continued producing the high standard of food expected by all the schools. During this time long lasting friendships and excellent working relationships were formed which has been beneficial for both kitchens.

After the October half term it seemed very quiet for us at Bridport because our foster team had moved into their own kitchen. Unfortunately the Weymouth Kitchen Manager resigned in November and I was seconded to the Weymouth kitchen to oversee food production, manage the team and ensure that LFL policies and procedures were fully embedded. During this time, Will Stork, Deputy Kitchen Manager, did a fantastic job of managing the Bridport kitchen, liaising with me daily to ensure that there were no problems.

I returned to the Bridport kitchen in the Spring term after a new Kitchen Manager had been appointed for Weymouth and this term ran smoothly. In this term one of our longstanding cooks, Dan Staple, took part in the LACA Host a School Chef initiative. Dan had a thoroughly enjoyable day at Rick Stein's restaurant in Sandbanks where he assisted the Head Chef on the pass at lunchtime.



Parent/Carer Feedback...

"My boys both had the apple and pork burger, which was the yummiest burger they have ever had, and the fruit crumble, which was amazing"





In the Summer term I was shortlisted as one of three finalists for the BBC Food and Farming's Cook of the Year award. Barry Dovell, Catering Manager, Will Stork, Deputy Kitchen Manager, and I all attended the awards ceremony held at Bristol City Hall. Although I didn't win the award that

evening, the experience was fantastic and we met some very interesting people. We were inspired and returned with lots of new ideas to try at LFL.

Although the Summer term was very hot in the kitchen, and seemed to be very long, it went well and the staff ended the year feeling happy and very proud of their achievements.

Overall, I feel this year has been a good year for the Bridport team. Team morale is high and everyone is settled in their role within the team and are keen and willing to progress where possible. I would like to end the report by saying a huge thank you to everyone in my team for all the hard work and extra effort that they have put in this year - We now have a team that we can, and should, be extremely proud of.

Ashley Painter, Bridport Kitchen Manager.



Schools Feedback...

"The children are really enjoying the meals and the amount of children now eating school meals has almost doubled compared to last year!"



All Saints CE Primary School

Blandford Kitchen



When we returned in September we helped out with the delayed Weymouth kitchen by welcoming Justin and Teresa into our team and, as well as supplying two new schools, we supplied meals to four of the Weymouth kitchen's schools for the first half term. Space and oven capacity were big issues within the kitchen but I am very proud of how we managed the whole thing.

There was a period of unrest within the kitchen in the second half of the Autumn term when Chris Haskell, Sue Benjafaar and Sarah Gittins all left but, in true Blandford style, the staff stepped up to the mark. Suzie Smith was promoted to Assistant Cook, Jo Phillips increased her hours and Helen Lunn, who previously worked part-time on Mondays, became a full-time Driver/GA. Louise House also transferred from the Shillingstone kitchen to increase her hours and she has been a welcome addition to the team. Christmas was harder than usual because not all of the staffing hours were covered, but we managed.

I'm very pleased to say that by mid-January Chris Haskell had returned – he had seen the error of his ways! We then settled down and caught up with things. Tracy Dawson and I celebrated our 10 year work anniversaries on the 16th February and were touched by the comments and congratulations that we received.



In February, we were approached by the Forum Centre, Blandford, which is a small pupil referral unit. One of their staff had been talking about school meals services at a training day. Some of our Headteachers were also at this event and advised them to contact us because they are very happy with their school meals service and our flapjack is 'legendary!' Although it is only a small number of meals each day, we are happy to supply them because their pupils especially benefit from having a good quality hot meal. The staff told us that pupils receive very little food of any nutritional value at home and many appear at the unit clutching an energy drink and no food. Within a few weeks of starting the service, we received some very positive feedback:

- One pupil said that he "never knew vegetables could taste so good"
- Some Year 9 pupils had never tasted fish before but were now enjoying it, and
- Some pupils had never tasted melon before and, at first, would only put their tongue on it – again, this is now a popular menu choice.

The meal numbers have gone from strength to strength and a permanent contract is now in place.

In the Summer term we began discussions with The Harbour School in Bovington, a brand new school for pupils with special educational needs, and we agreed that we would supply them from September. This will begin with small numbers of daily meals but over the next 5 years will grow into a large contract as the numbers on roll increase. There will also be a bespoke menu which will take more thought and planning, which is a strength of the Blandford kitchen.

Sixpenny Handley First School also approached Caroline and they too will be starting to receive meals in September, despite initially indicating that they would join us in September 2020! Consequently, we will be reverting to 3 van routes (which we had before the Shillingstone kitchen opened) and Chris Haskell will be back in the driving seat, for the time being.

So here we are again at the beginning of another new school year, ready to embrace whatever it will bring. I would like to thank all of my staff for sticking with it during the very hard first part of last year and for accepting all the changes as, without them, this simply would not have been possible.

Jayne Fry, Blandford Kitchen Manager.



Parent/Carer Feedback...

"My daughter said best roast potatoes ever and the beef tasted yummy like steak! She's fussy, so the food must be nice!"



Shillingstone Kitchen

At Shillingstone we were delighted to start the school year with a new school - A big welcome to Okeford Fitzpaine! We now produce up to 400 home cooked meals each day for seven primary schools in North Dorset. We are proud of the feedback we receive from our schools and from parents and are pleased to have been awarded another 5* rating when the Environmental Health Officer inspected our kitchen.

For the second consecutive year Chris Plowman-Hart entered the School Chef of the Year competition and reached the Regional Finals with his Indian Banquet menu. Chris is a talented Chef and I can assure you that his entry tasted every bit as delicious as it looked!



We supported the Weymouth kitchen whilst they were being established. Special thanks to Denise for the 3,000 additional Catherine Wheel Cookies she made!



Karen Churchill, General Assistant/Driver and valued team member was awarded her 5-year service certificate. We also welcomed two new members of staff to our team – Fiona Platts and Rachael Brewer, who are job sharing the second Driver/GA post. Fiona brings extensive customer service experience coupled with warmth and enthusiasm whilst Rachael comes from an education background and is quickly learning catering jargon.

At the foot of the daily production board there is always a 'THANK YOU.' This is sincere and I would like to thank the team again for all their hard work and dedication which enables our kitchen to produce great quality school meals and service with a smile. This year we have met the challenges of changes in the work place, remained united and demonstrated that we are a 'can do' hub.

I would also like to say thank you to the Head Office team and all my colleagues in the other LFL hubs for always being there at the end of the telephone and willing to help – it is very much appreciated.

Ruth Cook, Shillingstone Kitchen Manager



Schools Feedback...

From a Year 1 student "BBQ Pork was so delicious the new potato rolled into the BBQ sauce and it was so tasty I didn't mind"





Weymouth Kitchen

The Weymouth team have had a very challenging first year at Local Food Links and the staff have worked extremely hard. They were initially based from other LFL kitchens and moved to the new hub at the end of October 2018. The new hub supplies 14 schools with 1,250 meals/day. The new hub includes a gluten free prep room which is where all gluten free items are produced for every kitchen. That is very important for gluten free pupils as the parent feedback below demonstrates:

"Firstly, I want to say a big thank you to you and your team for providing my daughter with good quality gluten and oat free school lunches. Some people would not realise the importance of ensuring no cross contamination from gluten as well as the gluten and oat free. It is reassuring to know that her food is so carefully handled. Please pass on our thanks to the team as my daughter is now able to run, jump, read, interact with her friends and is full of life and fun. The difference is amazing. It feels like she is now almost out of her gluten coma. Thank you for your part in this."

Fiona Gabe, the Kitchen Manager that transferred from the Dorchester kitchen resigned in October and the team were supported by the Bridport Kitchen Manager (thank you Ashley!) before I joined LFL in January. Lynn Parish, Deputy Kitchen Manager, and Christine Herridge were both very welcoming and helpful in showing me the ropes.

Although we have had some staffing issues over the last six months we are now, thankfully, a settled and fully staffed team. Robin Jones joined as a third cook in March; Rachael Walters joined as a General Assistant in April and Steven Roberts joins as a Driver/GA in September. We are also recruiting for an additional General Assistant for the next academic year.

We said goodbye to Christine Herridge, mobile cook, who resigned after a house move at the end of the school year and also to Dave Gutteridge, who left for personal reasons and we thank them both for all of their work over the years.

In the Summer term the news came that we would be supplying some new schools from September and the team were both excited about this and proud of the reputation they had built over a very busy year. By the time term ended, everybody was ready for a very well deserved break.

We were also delighted to be invited by CAF Venturesome to participate in a short film showcasing the positive outcomes from their investment which can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FE_D2B4GSLM&feature=youtu.be



I would like to thank the team for all their hard work and I look forward to building on this year's successes over the coming year.

Emma Miles, Weymouth Kitchen Manager.



Thank you for all your hard work over the last 5 years!

Karen Churchill - Shillingstone

Karina Holman - Bridport

Helen James - Bridport

Tim Peel - Central Team

Dawn Scadding - Bridport

Suzanne Smith - Blandford

Being a Business for Good

Local Food Links proud to be a social enterprise, a business that wants to change the world for the better and influence positive social change. This year LFL is listed amongst the NatWest SE100 Index which represents the 100 top ranked social enterprises in the country, an accolade that we are very proud of.



How do we change the world for the better?

- ✓ Reducing food waste, by only producing the number of meals ordered
- ✓ Reducing food miles, by buying from local suppliers
- ✓ Feeding children well, always meeting nutritional standards
- ✓ Free range eggs, Marine Steward Council certified sustainable fish, British Red Tractor meat and no added salt
- ✓ An inclusive school meals provider, our cashless system reduces the stigma of means-tested free school meals
- ✓ A flexible employer, 90% staff work term-time only



Launched by Paul, Mary and Stella McCartney in 2009, Meat Free Monday is a not-for-profit campaign which aims to raise awareness of the detrimental environmental impact of animal agriculture and industrial fishing. The campaign encourages people to help slow climate change, conserve precious natural resources and improve their health by having at least one plant-based day each week. This is something that LFL has trialled on its menu and hopes to repeat regularly over the coming year.

This year we also hosted our first Work Experience placement. A Year 11 pupil from The Woodroffe School in Lyme Regis spent a week in the Bridport kitchen to gain an insight into catering and the workplace. It was a positive experience for both parties and something we would do again.





FASCINATING FACTS



Fresh, Healthy, Tasty School Meals

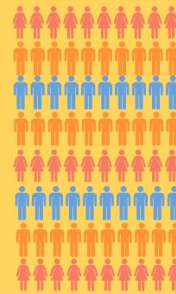
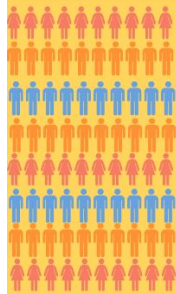
A WHOPPING

683,144

**MEALS WERE COOKED
AND DELIVERED IN
2018/2019**



**That is a
MAMMOTH
190,045 more
meals than
2017/2018!**



6,633 CHRISTMAS DINNERS

Christmas Dinners
ordered and produced
in 2018



EGGCELLENT!

30,000

Did you know here at LFL
we source our eggs locally
from the fabulous Foot's
Eggs Company & last year
alone we used just short of
30,000 eggs.

Number of schools per hub....

**BRIDPORT – 18
WEYMOUTH – 12
SHILLINGSTONE – 7
BLANDFORD – 12**



Our Schools

Bridport Schools

All Saints CofE Primary School, Bridport Primary School, Beaminster St Mary's Academy, Broadwindsor CE VC Primary School, Burton Bradstock CofE VC School, Charmouth Primary School, Damers First School, Greenford CofE Primary School, Loders CE Primary School, Parrett & Axe CE VA Primary School, Powerstock CofE Primary School, Salway Ash CofE Primary School, St Catherine's RC School, St Mary's CE VC Primary School (Thorncombe), St Michael's Primary School, Symondsbury CofE VA Primary School, Thorners Primary School, Winsham Community Primary School

Blandford Schools

Archbishop Wake CE Primary School, Blandford Nursery, Blandford St Mary CE Primary School, Cheselbourne Village School, The Dunbury CofE Academy, Downlands Primary School, Durweston CofE Primary School, Milldown CofE VC Primary School, Milborne St Andrew First School, Pimperne CofE VC Primary School, Spetisbury CofE Primary School, The Forum Centre

Shillingstone Schools

Hazelbury Bryan Primary School, Okeford Fitzpaine CofE Primary School, Shillingstone CofE Primary School, St Nicholas CE VA Primary School, Stalbridge Primary School, Stower Provost Community School, William Barnes Primary School.

Weymouth Schools

Broadmayne First School, Cerne Abbas CofE First School, Frome Valley CE First School, Manor Park CofE VC First School, Piddle Valley CofE First School, Prince of Wales First School, Puddletown CE VC First School, Radipole Primary School, St Mary's Catholic First School, St Mary's CE VC First School, St Mary's CE Middle School, Sticklands CofE Primary School, Winterbourne Valley CE VA First School.



Our Board of Directors



*Top Row L-R: Nick Ziebland, Mark Swire, Veronique singer, Robin Amswych.
Bottom Row L-R: Caroline Morgan, Mike Henderson, Linda Newman.*

Mike Henderson, Chair of the Board and Non-Executive Director

Michael graduated from the University of Surrey with an honours degree in Hotel and Catering Management. He then spent his working life in the pub industry, holding various senior positions with Marstons, Greenalls, Scottish and Newcastle Breweries and latterly Heineken. He estimates he has been responsible for some 2000 pubs over his working life.

He currently acts as a mentor for Dorset Mentoring and, at present, is mentoring 4 small businesses.

Caroline Morgan, Chief Executive

Caroline has a degree in Catering Management and varied business experience – she has worked for the BBC, the Australian High Commission and the School of Hospitality at Oxford Brookes University. Caroline moved to Dorset when her children were young and ran healthy eating workshops in deprived areas of Weymouth and Portland for the Dorset Food and Health Trust. At the same time, she became a Governor at her children's school, The Prince of Wales First School in Dorchester – and persuaded the Headteacher to re-start the hot meals service.

Caroline joined Local Food Links in 2006 as a School Meals Development Worker, tasked with re-introducing school meals to 8 Primary Schools in the Bridport Area after a 25 year gap in provision and became CEO in 2012. Thirteen years later, the organisation works in partnership with 56 schools out of 4 large hub kitchens, providing delicious food and a delivered in service which works for Dorset and its neighbouring counties.

Veronique Singer, Non-Executive Director

Veronique has worked in Dorset schools for 18 years, initially as a deputy headteacher and then as a headteacher. She is currently head at Radipole Primary School in Weymouth, which is a larger than average primary school. The school installed a kitchen in 2011 and began working with Local Food Links in 2012.

Mark Swire, Non-Executive Director

Mark qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1994 and spent 5 years with KPMG in London, working in audit and transactional services. He then moved to Ceridian Corporation, a US listed company, in a Group Accounting role that involved reporting and internal control in payroll and outsourcing.

More recently Mark has been involved with several start-ups, including one that was AIM-listed while he was Finance Director, and co-founded a UK-based ethical clothing company. Mark is currently Finance Director of an owner-managed telecoms company in Dorset and is active in local animal and children's charities.

Nick Ziebland, Non-Executive Director

Nick has spent most of his career in retail, working at J Sainsbury, Drivers Jonas and primarily in the retail division of BAA plc. At BAA Nick initially oversaw retail operations, turning over £150m a year. He then became Director of Retail Strategy and was responsible for the successful design, leasing, construction, fit-out and opening of 140 shops and food & beverage outlets at Heathrow Terminal 5. He retired from BAA in 2008.

Nick is now a Non-Executive Director of Poole Hospital and a Trustee of Bridport Arts Centre.

Robin Amswych, Non-Executive Director

Robin is a retired senior management/HR consultant with experience in both large and small organisations. Throughout his career Robin has focused on the achievement of improvement in performance at all levels in an organization. Robin is the owner & Managing Director of ProScreen Limited, a small business organising private cervical screening for clients throughout the country.

Linda Newman, Company Secretary and Finance Director

Linda joined Local Food Links in Oct 2017 as Finance Manager and is AAT qualified. She has a wealth of financial and management experience with over 25 years for Barclays Bank in management accounting and business partnering roles in London and Poole.

Linda has first hand customer experience of Local Food Links from when her daughter was a pupil at St Catherine's Primary School in Bridport and is passionate about helping Local Food Links to be a success.

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