



# Don't Feed the Wolf !

The Finnish word for food waste is 'hukkaa' which, by strange coincidence, is also the Finnish word for 'wolf' – hence the countrywide campaign of 'ala ruoki hukkaa' or 'don't feed the wolf'.



At the invitation of Devon County Council, and as part of the Interreg funded Ecowaste 4 Food project, Penny and Jackie were able to represent Plymouth in Seinajoki, Finland for a week in January. Flying in to Helsinki and travelling by train 390 kms north, they were able to join teams from Greece, Italy, France, Poland, Spain and Finland in visits to a range of local food waste initiatives and to share ideas and experience. The project will be paying a return visit to the UK in April and will be visiting DCFA in Stonehouse as one of the UK's case studies.

**So what is Finland like ?** In January it can be very cold – down to -48 degrees in the North and, when we were there, down to -14 in the Vaasa region where Seinajoki is located. Although it hadn't snowed much in Helsinki by the time we got there on 14<sup>th</sup> Jan (something that was worrying the locals), there had been 1.5 ft in Seinajoki and it snowed almost everyday. By the time we returned to the capital, it had snowed and the city had taken on a very Nordic atmosphere. Only 7% of Finland is given over to agriculture (70% is pine, spruce and birch forest) so they import and process quite a bit. One of our visits focused on this. Finland also has over 180,000 lakes and enjoys fish products as well as berries (lingon, cloud, cranberries and blue berries being the most obvious), pickles and more unusual foods such as bear.....even though it is their national animal ! (No I didn't try it....30 euros a tin !). Surprisingly, many of the homes outside the limited urban areas have access to fruit trees (another case study) and many grow their own veg – with a population density of only 4.2 people per square mile self-sufficiency seems to be far better understood.

We found everyone to be really friendly and great fun. The food was delicious...with great options for both vegans and vegetarians as well as choices such as reindeer and elk (moose) for meat eaters. The Finns like their coffee and their gins (although we didn't tell them about Plymouth Gin !). Although the currency is the euro, the most noticeable thing about everyday life was how expensive everything was. Even so, the hospitality was warm and genuine with cinnamon buns and huge buffet breakfasts an everyday option. That's where our first simple lesson was learned. Almost everywhere you eat there are polite notices saying "*please do not take more than you can eat*". It's a very subtle way of reminding people not to waste food and it works !



Elsewhere we also noticed copious food and organic waste bins and it was clear that recycling was popular. Many homes have their own biomass boilers so very little is wasted.

We started the study tour at the University of Frami in Seinajoki. Here academic studies are co-mingled with vocational skills and food management and processing are very high profile. Here we learned more about Omenhaus – a surplus apple process CIC that creates organic juice in the most cost and energy effective way.



We moved on to a local primary school (where they ski to school !) where a project has reduced the food waste from school meals by 80% even though they still offer three choices a day. The school is supported by the local waste management ‘team’ – a commercial outlet that works with the local authority – who were able to explain how food waste is collected from local households. From the school we moved on to the Atria Finland meat processing company which, until very recently, was the biggest and most effective robotic plant in the EU. Here they process up to 3000 pigs a day – from slaughter (which took animal welfare very seriously) to distribution. From gammon joints to pet foods the process allows for high quality, minimum waste production in a process that has been extended all over the Nordic countries and in to Russia. It was a bit of a challenge trying to explain the popularity of pork scratchings to one of the Directors...not something they’ve tried.....yet !

We ended the day at a small CIC based in a former dairy that processes rape seed in to high grade, organic oils and a local, sustainable form of cattle feed; again, reducing the waste produced to virtually nothing. Dinner that evening was at a local restaurant that works with the ResQ project that allows people to purchase surplus restaurant food at a reduce price.....a scheme replicated by Too Good to Go (<https://toogoodtogo.co.uk/> ) here in the UK. Penny is currently working to introduce more options here in Plymouth.

Our last day was spent at the oldest farm in Seinajoki, learning about the Finnish equivalent of the Women’s Institute (the Rural Women’s Alliance) who run skills workshops in managing food budgets, meal planning and cooking with leftovers and surplus supplies.....and a very nice lunch the provided too !

**What did we learn ?** The whole visit was inspirational. For me, the biggest message was found in the simplicity of approach, the use of a memorable strap line and the ‘can do’ attitude that everyone seemed to have. It showed that, despite completely different conditions, the simple solutions are often the best. We share many approaches with our European friends and even though we may have different ways of delivering results, the problems, and solutions, can be shared.

We’ve only been able to share a tiny bit of the experience here so please do not hesitate to ask questions and, hopefully, we’ll continue our links to boost food waste management here in Plymouth with the support of our Interreg friends. Many thanks to Emma and Devon County Council for making this possible

**The Bianca Statue and the Tree :** The latest info we have is that a meeting has been secured with Adrian Vinken at the Theatre Royal to discuss the positioning of the Bianca statue; with a view to avoiding the loss of a further mature Lime Tree from Royal Parade. The meeting is on the 26<sup>th</sup> Feb...the tree is due for felling on the 25<sup>th</sup> ! Hopefully this will be postponed whilst discussions are held !

**The POP+ Annual Conference and AGM ....15<sup>th</sup> March, Crowne Plaza Hotel, The Hoe.**

Want to know more about the voluntary and community city in Plymouth, the Esme Fairburn funding, Compassionate cities, Participatory Cities, Sustainable Cities and the Our Plymouth website ? So do we ! Join us by booking in at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pop-conference-and-agm-thursday-march-15th-2018-tickets-42568503540?aff=es2>

## Air Quality Working Group :

At the recent Council meeting, Alan Ramage asked :

**Plymouth Green Book Club recently read “An Air That Kills” by Dr John Rieuwerts of Plymouth University.**

**It states air pollution in Plymouth is greatest along arterial routes. Legal exceedances and even low levels are harmful especially to schoolchildren. What measures are being proposed to address this?**



In response, Cllr **Councillor Lynda Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care** said :

Plymouth City Council takes air quality seriously and the principles of protecting the air we breathe is contained within the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP), a single strategic plan for the city and the neighbouring district authorities of South Hams and West Devon, that has a timeframe to 2034 and beyond and that is currently in the latter stages of development. The JLP brings together all of the city's long term strategic plans into one place and includes the city's economic, land use planning, housing, transport and environmental policies ensuring a coordinated approach to how the city evolves. The air quality issue is embedded into the JLP as it was previously in the Plymouth Plan and the Local Development Framework before that.

Air quality monitoring is undertaken in Plymouth continuously at various sites, which meet the criteria for assessment which is prescribed by DEFRA. This includes sites where residents live and could be exposed to increased levels of pollution, such as busy transport routes. This monitoring data is used to compare against the annual air quality objectives, which are set out by Government in regulations. Where levels exceed the objective figures, a Local Authority is required to declare an Air Quality Management Area, including an action plan showing how measures will be implemented to improve air quality.

In Plymouth, an AQMA was declared in 2014 for exceedance of nitrogen dioxide, covering five distinct areas and the adjoining road networks, replacing the previously declared two individual AQMA's. Transport emissions were identified as the primary contributor. Details of the AQMA are on the Council website.

Plymouth City Council is pleased to report that air quality improvements are being observed in the AQMA, with the majority of the results now being below the air quality objective. We are closely reviewing the situation annually and discussing the observed improvements with DEFRA with a view to revoking or amending the AQMA as soon as we are able.

Key to achieving these results has been the Council's balanced transport strategy, that seeks to support the objective of cleaner, healthier air for its residents and visitors. The strategy has a strong focus on encouraging greater sustainable transport use with more trips undertaken by bus, cycle and foot alongside reducing the need to travel and providing and enabling greater use of cleaner fuel vehicles. The numbers of people cycling in particular has seen a dramatic rise with a 51% increase between 2009-2015, which is a trend that the Council is keen to see continue.

*City Council Monday 29 January 2018*

## GREENING THE MANIFESTOS

Following the January meeting we have prepared a 'guide' to the top ten green issues worrying Environment Plymouth members in readiness for the local elections in May. The guide has now been circulated to all the main parties and has received a very positive welcome.....just in case you get a chance to ask questions when canvassed ! Copies will accompany this Feedback Sheet and be made available on the Facebook Discussion page and, if I can get it to work, the POP+ Environment Plymouth webpage. See below for details.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Jacky Clift (POP) and James Brown (POSN) will be presenting the virtues of local trees and open spaces to the local Health and Wellbeing Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. This is a real step forward in the recognition of their value to the city. Many thanks to Andrew, Alan and David for providing background information for this.



**ETHICAL FASHION SHOW**

organic – homemade – recycled – slow fashion

*Fairtrade stall – music – refreshments*

7.30pm, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March  
Plymouth Unitarian Church  
Notte Street PL1 2HG

Tickets £7  
01752 290091

Thanks to SW Children's Hospice and St Luke's Hospice  
Proceeds to Smile & Plymouth Samaritans

## GREENING MAYFLOWER 400

The Community Fund opens for bids in April and Environment Plymouth has been encouraged to apply for some funding to help the project to become carbon neutral (amongst other things). The carbon footprint of transatlantic flights can be offset and they are already looking at sustainable supplies – hopefully no single use plastics ! On that topic.....

## PLASTIC FREE PLYMOUTH SOUND with SOUTH WEST WATER

An Action Plan is almost ready for submission, a Working group has been set up and has met, the Council adopted a plastics resolution on 29<sup>th</sup> January and is looking in to the action it can take, the NMA s going to be our flagship employer – with Friday the Turtle and his friends as our mascot(s) and it looks as though Plymouth will be a flagship city for the Plastic Free Coastlines campaign as we are the biggest community on their list by far. In addition to those already involved, this week has seen South West Water and Derriford Hospital signing up and look out for the invites to our launch at Plymouth Dome on Weds 7<sup>th</sup> March from 5.30pm....sponsored by South West Water who have granted us £6000 to deliver the first steps.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO :

The general Facebook page : <https://www.facebook.com/environmentplymouth2017/>

The discussion group : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/123427611574500/> (please ask to join)

or

<https://www.plymouthoctopus.org/groups/environment-plymouth/>