**Salford CVS Annual Conference**

**30th October 2024**

**Salford Community Stadium**

Morning workshop:  **The Tofu elephant in the room**

Number of attendees: **29**

Facilitator: **Ella Bulbeck and Martyn Willcock, Salford CVS**

Panel members: **Arun & Silva – Plant Based Treaty; Richard Mcilwain – The Vegetarian Society; Paula Maguire – Cowherds**

Panel speaker notes: **Rachel**

**Richard Mcilwain – The Vegetarian Society**

Asked how many people Vegan are, Vegetarian, Flexi, Meat eaters. Only one main meat eater in the room.

Speaking about the importance of plant-based eating and what the organisation do and how Salford community can get involved with The Vegetarian Society.

**History of Vegetarian society**

77 years old. Birthplace in Salford - Salford doesn’t make enough of that legacy currently. The society started with absence of alcohol and meat.

The Vegetarian Society recently moved to a new office in Ancoats and this is where they hold all the archives or writers which people can come and view.

The organisation are currently off Vegetarian cooking classes.

The organisation is a member organisation and Richard encouraged people to sign up or to sign up to the newsletter.

Richard believes we cannot have a conversation on climate without talking about food.

Beef & Lamp are highest carbon footprint of the foods you can eat.

Eating a plant rich diet is a good step to take and one of the campaigns they run is National Vegetarian Week – 1st – 7th October.

The campaign launches in August to encourage as many people as possible to have a go. The difference between Vegetarian and Vegan is that Vegetarian is about encouraging people to adopt it and to try and experiment with a vegetarian diet more, it isn’t a challenge as they want the campaign to be inclusive.

Would be great to get Salford organisations champions National Vegetarian week.

COOK – Teaching Kitchen - Hoping to open 17th November.

Run paid for courses. Full day, diploma or evening supper club offer.

Looking to do more training for public sector catering e.g. Prison catering, schools, hospitals; etc.

Looking to offer free community classes for people either in the teaching kitchen or in community venues but need to secure grant funding for this. Received some from National Lottery for classes in Manchester but keen to get partnerships with VCSE organisations to open the world of plant-based cooking for people. Want to show that this is for everyone.

**Paula Maguire – Cowherds**

Set up Cowherds in 2013 and it was a food anything enterprise – they did anything to do with vegan food. The basis of setting it up was Paula was diagnosed with a condition and was on lots of medication but in 2007 she was employed by Unlimited Potential where she met other people with her condition and learnt how others have managed it with a plant-based diet and by doing the same she cured her condition.

They also sold veg in sheltered housing, cooked food in homeless shelters, market stalls – anything to get the name out there.

Was applying for funding and in 2012 received a large grant pot from CVS and used this to get a van. The van was parked in Greengate’s square and was used as a business with a social enterprise arm. Only people with disabilities used. Used commercial in the day and then went out to communities at night to teach communities how to cook and donated juices to people (another part of the organisation). During this journey they learnt lots of lessons as it grew so quick and in the end they became a juice manufacturer as this was the biggest part of their businesses and so the businesses took off into that direction and they came away from the food.

As well as selling juices they were giving health information as well for e.g. problems with sleep, acid reflux, weight problems; etc. and they started to give advice to help with this. The business grew too much and was a learning curve, so the business stopped however a year ago they started again and are rebranded as Pressed Up North. The new website and branding launches in January 2025.

The whole sale element of the business will be upscaled where they will sell to yoga studios, gyms; etc.

Paula wrote a book which she shared around the room, but it tells the story of their business journey.

**Arun & Silvia – Plant Based Treaty**

Arun & Silvia are volunteers for the Plant Based Treaty.

Two goals:

1. Work alongside the global plant-based treaty as a companion to the Paris agreement – to tackle escalating greenhouse gases driven in part by animal agriculture.
2. Implementation of the plant-based treaty at local level in local institutions. Including a shift in councils, public events, schools, care homes, hospitals and prisons and more.

Arun shared his experience of being in hospital and how there was no vegan option when asked about his dietary requirements.

In New York all their hospital foods are vegan by default, but they aren’t labelled vegan. In the hospitals you must request meat.

Plant based Treaty has 5 programs:

1. Collecting plant-based treaty endorsements
2. Plant based treaty city program
3. Menu change and public education
4. Advocacy at global talks
5. Training and capacity

Salford is one of the leading boroughs in Greater Manchester for the Plant Based Treaty. 5 town & City endorsements – Lambeth, Haywards Heath, Edinburgh, Norwich, Exmouth.

The local plant-based treaty has done a 5k no competitive run to encourage community involvement.

Community Education – Have Plant based starter kits.

The word vegan discourages people, so they are changing their vocabulary.

The endorsement is about supporting a global movement.

**Q&A**

**How do you link plant-based treaty to stopping land use change in the producer countries. Majority of demand is in developed countries but the countries supplying the food are less developed**

**How do you hope to bridge that gap using the global plant-based treaty?**

**Plant Based Treaty** - If the plant-based treaty can get the endorsement from more people it will help to raise awareness. Need to empower the community and helping to build the movement to help make a system change.

PBT do raise awareness in the community too. They raise awareness of the food system industry problems and encourage people to eat less meat or trying more meat free days. They also want more statutory services to offer plant-based foods so people can try which can help and encourage people to try and hopefully make behaviour changes in the future. This helps with supply and demand and hopefully this will help make a change.

**The Vegetarian Society** – Western consumption is the problem, not the global consumption. There is a general capitalism and consumption problem and the growth of these comes at a cost of the developing world.

Lots of organisations are working at a global level to get food on the agenda but locally it is about trying to raise awareness and get people to think about where things go and come from.

General lack of awareness of where things come from and the impacts.

Majority of soya grown is fed to pigs and poultry and it is this over consumption of meat that is driving the problems.

The consumption of meat is expected to raise globally as meat is still seen as a status symbol which is no different to the UK in the late 19th century. We need to inspire more people to make changes.

**Alison Page -** Lots of conversations happening in Salford about plant based but it is a difficult conversation to have. We need to learn from each other, find out what has worked for others and use this learning to increase changes. We also need larger organisations to sign the treaty.

A big issue is how do we offer vegetarian or vegan foods but keep the food local and healthy.

Need to think how can we get this as a strategic conversation. What can we do to get people thinking about plant based to help effect change.

**What happens to the pulp from Pressed Up North (previously Cowherds)?**

Tried drying it, tried offering to animals but they didn’t like it.

MUD said they would take it.

**Think Salford need to work together better to help make the changes that are needed when it comes to diet as there are lots of people who are taking action.**

**Question for Richard – Have TVS ever offered to train people to grow food commercially?**

Running an event in parliament with colleagues from Denmark to talk about how they have manged to get the Danish gov to get farm to fork approach. How to get manufacturers to use these farmers and to help solve the problem we need commercial farmers to switch by they will only switch of there is a market for it.

TVS are hoping to show that Denmark & Minister of agriculture who saw benefit of investing in plant-based grow is a model the UK can pick up. Lots of land in the UK which people have tried growing on.

We need to increase the variety of crops we grow, and we need to stop feeding these veg to animals and go straight to people.

This conversation is going on a lot but a national problem is to get a UK politician to say that people need to eat less meat as they are worried that this will affect votes.

Andy Burnham is being invited to an event and here they will try to encourage him to talk more about food.

**How do you engage ‘ordinary people’ to change their habits and move away from a meat-based diet to plant-based diet. At Langworthy Cornerstone they have free meals for people twice a week which are vegetarian, and it is full every week. What can we do to support this move for people coming from a space of economic deprivation?**

Pop up in a venue in Trafford where there was strong push back on the food. Cowherds spent time getting to know the community, built relationships and once the people knew and trusted them to took on board and tasted the food.

We need to stress there is cost savings to plant based.

Raising awareness that there are high protein plant-based options and to get high protein doesn’t mean just eating meat. Need to think about the impacts of social media where everything is about eating meat.

TVS – Received £100k to give out food boxes. This was packaged as a gift, it had recipe cards and two meals, and the feedback was fantastic.

Make it simple, accessible, look good and taste good. Need to think about what it is you offer them. Look good and taste good and accessible, simple to do understand too.

PBT – Want to change the world with kindness and during their events they give out free food and events are food so hopefully these events help engage people.

Buying locally and British is more expensive than buying from abroad which is difficult**.**

**Actions**

* Need to use the ethnic minorities skills to help increase plant-based diets as lots of people in these communities eat plant based. Using their skills through volunteering or showing people how to cook will help empower people.
* Get medical experts involved in the conversation.
* A plant-based propaganda group getting VCSE groups together to make some practical actions and to think how together we can get the council to start thinking and actioning how we can make big changes when it comes to plant based / vegetarian eating.