



Community Fair Trade Organic

co-op news

Feb/Mar 2007

newsletter of the Dublin Food Co-op

Word From the Chair

By Monica Haughey (Editor/Co-op Chairperson)

This issue is largely devoted to news about the proposed premises at Newmarket Square. At this point, we have secured planning permission and work is continuing to establish a lease agreement between ourselves and the developer of the site. Aodhagán O Broin, who is the main negotiator for the Co-op, brings us the latest on the situation. Alongside these negotiations, a group of members have come together to look at how best to consult with members around the new premises and to begin to put in place a consultation process. Fiona Gormley, from this group gives an outline of the approach the group is taking and summarises what has been happening to date around the consultation process. If you have ideas about this process please do let Fiona Gormley or Pauric Cannon know as we are very open to views on this important process.

The Co-ordinating Body are enthusiastic about the new premises and see it as vital to have member participation in the shaping of the development of the Co-op. We see the new premises as a significant opportunity for the Co-op to provide more to its members. Do come along to view the new premises and make your suggestions at the Information Desk.

Alongside this work, we have been recruiting a Manager for the Co-op. This is a new post and one which is about enabling the Co-op to further grow and develop. It is timely that the recruitment has been coming to a close just as we are firming up our premises situation. Interviews were held last week for the Manager post and we hope to soon be in a position to announce details of that. We are still at the stage of checking references, agreeing contracts and seeking CB approval. This new person will be involved in engaging the Co-op in a consultation process and seeking to develop and implement a plan which would ensure the successful growth of our market. Alongside this, we will strive to ensure that the ethos, values and sense of community which is core to the Co-op will be maintained.

On a different note, we have some lovely cooking suggestions from Lorraine Fitzmaurice on spring cooking, and Larry Gordon is still encouraging us to get out into the hills! Perhaps he will organise a historic walk from St Andrews over to New Market Sq? It's an interesting route and as you know, Newmarket is in one of the oldest areas in Dublin and is steeped in history.

Premises Update

Plans to move the Co-op to a bigger and better premises have moved another step forward. Earlier this month Dublin City Council granted planning permission to change the use of the building we are looking at in Newmarket Square to use as a "Food Cooperative". This is an exciting development for us as it is the first time the Co-op has ever had planning permission, and indeed it is the first time a planning permission for this sort of use has ever been issued.

The next step is to finalise the details of the overall agreement with the landlord to the satisfaction of our legal team and other advisors, before presenting it for CB decision at the meeting scheduled for 26 February. The architectural plan to refurbish the building has been finalised (by the planning application), and a firm of builders will be appointed to carry out the structural works. However, the detailed interior design has not yet been completed, and members are invited to participate in this work (see our new wiki at www.dublinfoodcoop.com for details).

It is planned to have several visits of the premises for all interested members, starting on Saturday 24 February, and thereafter to visit and to work, to prepare the building for the builders. While the main building work will be carried out under contract, the finances of the operation and the timescale call for a great deal of help from members, mainly in the form of labour for preparatory work and to apply finishes (a lot of painting).

If all goes according to the timetable, building work could begin in mid-March, and would take about two months to carry out, and if we allow a few weeks more to finish out the building, we could be having our first market there on Saturday 2nd June.

We have a lot of work to do in the next three months, but if we all chip in it can be done, and we will create something we can be proud of, and that can bring us to the next stage of our development. It's your Co-op, and what you do now counts.

Aodhagán O'Broin

(Co-ordinating Body / Premises Working Group)

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Time to have your say!

Your opinion really does count, and to ensure the Co-op continues to meet your needs as it develops, a significant consultation process has been set up. A group of CB members as well as other Co-op members recently got together to discuss ways of encouraging involvement in Co-op affairs, in particular with the proposed move to a new premises.

The first meeting involved a wide-ranging discussion. The general feeling was that we need firstly to promote the whole idea of the Co-op and try and get people thinking about themselves as members of a vibrant, democratic organisation that welcomes their input and over which they have some ownership. Included in this is the need to capture something of the Co-op's history, the current situation and look at where we might be going in the future.

The proposed consultation process will focus on the move to Newmarket Square in the South inner city, and also examine ways to encourage more general participation among Co-op members.

As part of this process an Information Desk has been set up at the Co-op where information relating to the proposed relocation is on display. There are maps, architects drawings, FAQs, a proposed layout etc. You can go along over the next few Saturdays and discuss any suggestions or queries you may have. Open visits to the premises have also been organized for Saturdays over the next few weeks.

We hope to bring people together in all of this. The idea is to invite dialogue on all issues relating to the Co-op. This is your opportunity to get involved - it's your Co-op! If you have any views or ideas about the consultation process or would like to become involved please do contact myself or any member of the Co-ordinating Body.

Fiona Gormley (Co-ordinating Body / Consultation Group)

Members' Notice

Annual General Meeting

7.00 pm

of

Dublin Food Co-op Society Ltd.

Wed 4th April

at

St. Andrew's Resource Centre Pearse St. Dublin 2

Registration of members entitled to vote will take place between 6 and 7pm.

Light refreshments served.

Please ensure that your annual membership subscription is up to date to enable you to vote!

Some Co-op Member Comments on Relocation Received so Far

"Will there be much disruption when building work is going on?"

"Can we phase out St. Andrew's gradually?"

"Can everyone come: I'd like to be involved?"

"Don't move we need the Co-op here. It lives in the area and feels like a natural part of the [Pearse St.,] community."

"Would not be willing to move as I live in the [Pearse St.,] area."

"Can't wait...great location, wonderful catchment area. Very positive move for the Co-op. Arguably the future survival of the co-op will be [determined] influenced by this move."

"Will the Cosy Café facility be big enough? A microphone that works!"

"Fantastic area to go to. They'll love the Co-op."

"We would be very disappointed if St. Andrews was to be lost as a Food Co-op. Many, many locals use it and it's beneficial to an area devoid of such facilities. Health is a huge problem in this community and by having the Co-op is a start of changing the mindset towards healthy food and living."

"Will be nice to have space for coffee and a chat. To make it a nice social experience and developing a like-minded community. Also it would be a good idea if the growers gave receipts for their produce, otherwise it's impossible to know what each product costs. One just gets a final bill and can't question it! It would be great if the origin of the products were more clearly signalled. If you want to have more or less a home-grown diet and you're not very good at vegetables, and you [want to] learn, it could be really useful."

Pauric Cannon (Development Co-ordinator)

Year Round Vegetable Gardening

All of the vegetables that I am currently harvesting from my exposed Dublin allotment can easily survive the recent snow and cold weather (down to -3C at one stage) but nothing would remain edible below -20C, a temperature regularly experienced in the area where I grew up near Toronto.

Establishing year round local food systems in Toronto is difficult, though possible, but in Dublin I have found it much easier. I am still amazed at the diversity of vegetables that I can harvest fresh every month. Of course parsnips are the king of winter vegetables, becoming sweeter after a few hard frosts, and if the ground is not frozen or waterlogged, they are content to stay in the ground until needed. Celeriac, winter radish, scorzonera and salsify, though not traditionally part of the Irish diet, will easily wait out the winter where they grew. It is also

best to leave Jerusalem artichoke buried until needed. And if you have roots and tubers already stored in the shed or cellar, you'll have a feast readily available throughout the cold months.

As an experiment I planted an early variety of carrot last August, covered the bed with a moveable cold frame when the weather changed, and continued to harvest the delicious tender carrots until they ran out a few weeks ago. My daughter and the neighbourhood kids gobbled them up so quickly I will need to plant many more of these delicate winter carrots next year.

Of course there are many leafy brassicas that can be harvested fresh through the winter. The hardiest of these, and easiest to grow, is kale. Brussels sprouts are another hardy seasonal treat, which would probably be liked by more people if it were not for the unfortunate habit of over-cooking them. Cabbages and cauliflower varieties are now available fresh throughout the year. But I am anxiously waiting for the purple sprouting broccoli to begin to produce their beautifully flavoured spears.

Another common winter vegetable is the mellow flavoured leek, which would be standing proud all winter had the local rabbits not feasted on them last summer. Luckily we have a store of onions, shallots and garlic, which will last at least until the spring onions are available. As with the delicate winter carrots, a bit of protection from the frost and wind can extend the season of many plants right through the Irish winter and into the hunger gap of the spring. There is an enormous diversity of tastes, colours and textures available from lettuces, spinach, endive, chicory, parsley and many more exotic salad plants.

As I sort through seed catalogues and begin to plan for the coming growing season, I have to be mindful there is so much still in the ground. With winter vegetables yet to be harvested, and all of the early spring crops to be planted, the overlapping seasons can be tricky to juggle. This extra effort is worth it with all of the fresh local food that we are still eating as we head in to a new season. Check out Bruce's blog at <http://foodurbanism.blogspot.com/>

by Bruce Darrell (Co-op member)

Household Remedy: Onion Compress

Did you know that onion can work as a painkiller for anyone suffering from earache? Earache often appears in conjunction with a cold or sinusitis. Sometimes even just cold wind or a visit to the swimming pool might be the reason for it. An onion compress may relieve the pain and can be used as first aid. If the pain continues or the patient gets a temperature or if you have any concerns, a visit to your health practitioner may be necessary. Take the risk of an ear infection into consideration!

To make the onion compress you will need:

- * a thin piece of cloth (cotton),
- * an onion,
- * a pot with a lid,
- * a piece of wool cloth or a wool sock,
- * a scarf or a hat.

Chop the onion into small pieces and put it into the middle of the thin cotton cloth. Place this on a lid which is turned upside down. Place the lid like this on a pot containing some water. Heat the water slowly. This will gently heat the onion. Wait until the onion has a pleasant temperature - check that carefully! Wrap the onion pieces in the cloth. You can use tape to fix it and form a little package which is the size of the ear. On one side of the compress only one layer of cloth should cover the onion. Place this side on the aching ear (Again: Check the temperature carefully before placing it on the ear!). Place a piece of wool cloth or a sock on the compress and fix it all with a scarf or a hat. Leave it on for up to an hour and repeat up to three times daily. The smell is strong but so is the effect! I suffered from an ear infection three years ago and since then I am very fond of the healing effect of onions. Gute Besserung!

Reini Boch - Administrator (Reini is still on maternity leave but planning to return to her post soon.)

Delicious recipe

This is a lovely dish to complement the delicate spring vegetables arriving in the next few weeks.

Tagliatelle and Spring Vegetable Ragout

Serves 4

150g of tagliatelle pasta (spelt or buckwheat is good)

500g thin asparagus or 300g of thick asparagus

500g pod peas or snap peas

2/3 leeks (white part only)

1 small fennel bulb, quartered and sliced into ¼ inch pieces

1 carrot diced into ¼ inch pieces

Juice of 1 lemon

3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons of roughly chopped chervil (or tarragon)

1 clove of garlic finely chopped

3 tablespoons of sunflower margarine

1 tablespoon parsley chopped

Sea salt, coarsely ground black pepper

Parmesan

Cook the pasta al dente in plenty of boiling salted water. Rinse and set aside. Snap off the tough ends of the asparagus. Cut off the tips about 2 inches long and chop the remaining pieces on the diagonal. Shell the peas. If using snap peas slice in half lengthwise. Slice the leeks in half lengthwise; then cut

them diagonally into strips about ¼ inch wide and wash them well. Warm the olive oil and the sunflower margarine in a pan, add the leeks and saute for 3 minutes (do not allow to brown). Add the garlic, carrots, asparagus and lemon juice and a pinch of salt and 1/2 cups of boiling water. Cover and cook over a low heat for 5 minutes add the peas and the chervil and cook for a further 5 minutes. Remove the lid and add the cooked pasta and parsley and toss until the pasta is coated in the sauce. Season with salt and pepper and lemon juice if needed. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese or omit for dairy-free version.

By Lorraine Fitzmaurice (Co-op member and founder member of Blazing Salads).

Co-op Walks

February Walk

Where: Baldoyle Estuary and Portmarnock Peninsula. This is a coastal walk, some of it along roads and some over sand-dunes and along the Velvet Strand. Good views of Howth, Ireland's Eye and the north coast of Dublin and hopefully birds.

When: Sunday 25th February. Meet at the Sutton Dart Station on the northside of Dublin City at 11am. Dart trains run on Sundays but be sure that they are going to Sutton station.

March Walk

Where: Knocksink Wood and Prince William's Seat mountain. We begin in deciduous woodland, then conifers, farming land, heathland and bog. Knocksink in particular should have a good array of Spring flowers.

When: Sunday 25th March. Meet at the Clock Tower in Enniskerry at 11am. The 44 bus runs to Enniskerry from the city.

Important: For all walks bring comfortable walking footwear, warm, rainproof clothing and some food.

Walking Weekend in the Slieve Blooms

On Friday 13th April the walking group will be travelling to Birr in County Offaly to stay until Sunday the 15th. We will be exploring the area in particular walking in the Slieve Bloom mountains. We will hopefully be staying in a Bed and Breakfast in Birr and everybody is welcome. If you are interested or want more info. Contact me, Larry Gordon, at the phone numbers below before the 3rd March so I can book your place.

For more information on all walks and the weekend away, or if you need a lift, contact Larry Gordon at 2882957(H), or at 087-6832827(Mob).

notice board

Co-op Events

Saturday March 3rd. (12 noon to 2pm)

Shiatsu with Robert Geart and Marina Bilak from the Shiatsu Association. Robert and Marina plan to show the healing properties of this traditional form of Japanese massage. The demonstration will take place on the stage beside the 'Cosy Cafe' on soft mats. Everyone is welcome to experience this free demonstration.

Saturday May 5th. (11am to 12 noon) in Room 2 upstairs 'Big Fat Myths - The (O)mega Confusion: How Much Fat is Healthy?' Speaker: Gosia Rzeszutek MA, MBS

Pauric Cannon, Development Coordinator.

Help Rota Dates

Help Rota members please note that reminders (where needed) are now being sent by email or text message rather than individual phone calls; please ensure your email address or mobile no. is on record with the Help Rota Co-ordinator also specifying by which way you prefer to be reminded (if at all).

A	03 Mar	28 Apr	16 June	4 Aug
B	10 Mar	5 May	23 June	11 Aug
C	24 Mar	12 May	30 June	18 Aug
D	31 Mar	19 May	7 July	25 Aug
E	7 Apr	26 May	14 July	1 Sept
F	14 Apr	2 June	21 July	8 Sept
G	21 Apr	9 June	28 July	15 Sept

Please note that the Co-op is closed Saturday March 17th St. Patrick's Day!

Co-Op News Team

Any articles or letters to the Members Forum for inclusion in next newsheet should be forwarded to editor@dublinfoodcoop.com or by post to Co-op News, Dublin Food Coop, 12A North King St., Dublin 7. Any members interested in helping with the newsletter please also get in touch.

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