**District Dispatch**

We are lucky to live in an area which has such an abundance of wonderful food producers. You can easily enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner using ingredients and produce made right here in the district!

From September 20 it will be British Food Fortnight, which is dedicated to celebrating the diverse and delicious range of food made and grown across our nation. The celebration takes place to tie in with the traditional Harvest Festival and aims to engage retail, catering, education and volunteer sectors in create a proper market from British food — anyone can take part, from producers and growers to pubs and cafes, care homes and schools and other community groups. Find out more about how you can embrace the campaign at: [www.lovebritishfood.co.uk/whats-it-all-about](http://www.lovebritishfood.co.uk/whats-it-all-about)

On the theme of local food, you may have heard of the ‘Sussex Six’ campaign which is encouraging businesses in the district to sign up and pledge to stock or use at least six more items or ingredients that are from Sussex. The aim of this is to create a strong local food market and supply chains.

If we spend more of our money on food made locally, the more of it stays within the local economy, and often goes round two or three times. This is good for businesses, residents and communities as it supports local jobs and enables smaller businesses to grow. This can boost the prosperity of our area and make a huge difference, especially in areas where there are no major industries or employers.

Each business that signs up to the campaign will receive marketing information that they can use to help their customers identify the local items they have chosen to stock or use in their products. You may be interested to know that there is a local directory of food producers which businesses can currently get listed on for free.

Since the campaign launched here in the Chichester District in the summer, there’s been a positive response from businesses but there are many more out there who would really benefit from getting involved and getting listed and if you run a small business I would really encourage you to find out more and make the pledge.

Potential customers like you or me can also look up to see the range of producers here in our district and find out where to get their products.

Interestingly, when people are aware of who their local producers are they are more likely to choose them, or choose a meal from a menu that is made with food from the area. You can find out more about the campaign at:  <https://sussexfoodanddrink.org/sussex-six/>

Another excellent way of supporting local food producers is to head to your local farmers’ market. Our council organises the Chichester Farmers’ Market which takes place on the first and third Friday of the month in the city centre. Produce sold here comes from within 50 miles and features a wide range of goods from fruit and vegetables to baked foods and locally caught fish, to fish, salad and locally-reared meat.

The wonderful aspect of shopping at your local farmers’ market is that you can chat to the stallholders about where their products have come from and how they have been made – you really do learn more about where your food comes from.

Midhurst Town Council also run their own farmers’ market which takes place on the first Saturday of the month, while Petworth have a farmers’ market that takes place every fourth Saturday of the month.

What’s great about the Sussex Six and farmers’ markets is that they consist of local people who are passionate about good food and want to really contribute to their communities. By supporting them we can also make a difference.

Best Wishes

Harsha Desai

Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Communications, Licensing and Events at Chichester District Council

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