



# Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

## A structure that changed over time

Vic Borrill

[Vic@bhfood.org.uk](mailto:Vic@bhfood.org.uk)

@harvestbh



# 2003 – 2008 - an unincorporated association

- Early days partnership meetings brought together a breadth of people – good Chair key to keep conversation ‘on track’
- Terms of reference – both what aiming to do ‘encourage a more sustainable food system’ and how work
- Held food conference, worked on strategy
- 2006-2008 – more formalised with an ‘Organising Committee’ an elected Board. The OC comprised representatives from key statutory organisation, a local Councillor and spaces for food projects / businesses
- Can have a bank account & receive grants. Simple and flexible. Gave the Food Partnership an independent identity. Unincorporated association can’t employ people so 1<sup>st</sup> part time member of staff was hosted by Food Matters.



Main functions of BHFP were around creating links across sectors, communicating about the benefits of a food systems approach and a commitment to partnership work. 2006 Spade to Spoon food strategy stated support to establish an organisation (BHFP) to provide leadership and co-ordination of the strategy

An independent organisation that

- delivers services including weight management groups, food growing projects with vulnerable adults, cookery classes and work with schools
- employs people (currently 20 staff)
- applies for funds from a wide source,
- sells training and consultancy
- supports community food projects
- campaigns and influences at a local, regional and national level.
- provides leadership and co-ordination for the Food Strategy
- facilitates partnership work



# 2008 – 2017 structure

↓ 2008 registered as a company limited by guarantee & applied for charitable status

↓ Turned down for charitable status because ‘promote’ certain businesses & work with private enterprises eg Healthy Choice Award. Decided that these were too important to abandon

→ Since then – legal entity is company limited by guarantee but our Memorandum and Articles of Association set out our ‘not for profit’ approach. Any ‘profit’ is reinvested in community food work in the city usually via our Good Food Grants (Up to £800). Are we a Social Enterprise?

- We are subject to Corporation Tax and can’t claim gift aid – some funders accept our not profit status and others don’t.
- Considered CIC status but our membership structure complicated this
- We publish detailed accounts, hold AGMs where Board is elected and reports presented – transparency is important to us
- Track record has proven to be as important as our formal structure
- Partnership work on food strategy happens via a number of forums not just the meeting of the BHFP Board

# Board of BHFP

- Board responsible for both the governance of the organisation (and legal responsibilities that go with this) and to act as the lead for the partnership responsible for the delivery of the food strategy
- Board comprises of 9 people elected from the membership (anyone who lives or works in city and supports our aims). 1 elected Councillor (lead administration nominates), 1 Council Officer, 1 Health Rep (public health, PCT before that), 1 place for Food Matters (founders and national policy).
- The 9 elected members – variety of backgrounds – community food project, farmer, local food businesses, accountant. One third step down each year and new members are recruited based on skills and background.
- We often have more candidates than places in which case an election is held at the AGM
- All of the elected Board members are the company directors and responsible for £1 liability if the company winds up

Looking ahead we want to separate the governance of the food strategy from the governance of the organisation (and are using the refresh of the food strategy action plan to do this) – as the organisation gets bigger and more complex needs a different governance arrangement

We are revisiting the issue of charitable status (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)