



CHANGE YOU CAN TASTE

How Locavore is
changing the food
system



Introduction

9 years ago I founded Locavore in an effort to do something practical to make local food available to more people, with the hope and ambition that we would help trigger the start of a food revolution.

Since then the hard work of our team has expanded Locavore's reach and mission to grow us into a social enterprise which now employs more than 90 people with a projected turnover in 2020-21 of £5 million.

Our aim, put simply, is to offer more people alternatives to conventional supermarkets so that they can choose local, organic foods and goods which are better for people and the planet.

Over the coming years we have plans to continue expanding by opening more shops and increasing our capacity to grow food, deliver veg boxes, and do everything else that we do.

This report gives a flavour of some of our achievements in 2020, and some ideas of where we want to go in 2021 - thanks for taking the journey with us.

Reuben Chesters, Managing Director



“We must begin to re-localise our food chain, and that means breaking the supermarkets’ vice-like grip on it as they are key players in the globalisation of food. If we continue to rely on faceless people in faraway places to feed us, we cannot hope to trace the provenance of what’s on our plates, or be assured of its wholesomeness”

Mike Small, Scotland’s Local Food Revolution

Our Mission

Locavore exists to help build more sustainable food networks which are better for the environment, society, local communities and their economies. In short, we want a food system which feeds us all while also nourishing a healthy, fair and prosperous environment, society and economy.

We’re working towards this by building an alternative to the conventional supermarket supply chains which we feel do not set out to do any of this. Our core interests are:

- Localising food growing, processing and production;
- Promoting sustainable land use with organic and agroecological agriculture;
- Creating short supply chains;
- Reducing waste and maximising resource efficiency;
- Creating a fairer and more redistributive economy;
- Tackling climate change.

Comparing the wages for entry level Customer Service roles between the UK's four largest supermarket chains and Locavore:



£8.41 per hour

10% Staff discount after 6 months

UK Market share: **27%**



£9.11 per hour

10% Staff discount after 3 months

UK Market share: **15%**



£8.82 per hour

10% Staff discount after 3 months

UK Market share: **14%**



£8.90 per hour

10% Staff discount

UK Market share: **10%**



£9.60 per hour

25% Staff discount, day one

UK Market share: Don't be silly.

Our Team

We are Real Living Wage employers, and we pay all of our team a minimum rate of £9.60 an hour, regardless of age, compared to the UK Government set Minimum Wage of £8.72 ph, or as low as £6.45 for people aged 18 to 20. Our pay ratio, the gap between the lowest and highest levels of pay, is 2:1, compared to 10:1 for Glasgow City Council and 3422:1 at Ocado.

We pay this because we think it's the right thing to do, and we believe it should be mandatory, not least because some employers pay less, relying on benefits or tax credits to pick up the difference. We also offer all staff a 25% discount from the day they start, including in-store and veg-box deliveries.

As the business has grown, we've added new support roles this year including for HR, to make sure we grow the right infrastructure to support our people. This year we conducted our first staff satisfaction survey, finding out more about what we're like as an employer, and we're working through an action list based on these results. What it really told us is that people want to work with Locavore because they believe in our mission, and that's something we'll never take for granted.

"Because the focus of the company is more ethical than any previous employers I've worked for I feel that staff are respected and appreciated as part of this overall ideology"

Staff satisfaction survey respondent



Sources: Wage information from [indeed.co.uk](https://www.indeed.co.uk); Market share from [kantarworldpanel.com](https://www.kantarworldpanel.com)



“There is nothing necessarily ideal about a ‘local food system’. Any change must pass a number of other key tests to be sustainable. It must be based on inputs that are part of a closed loop system. It must be based on ‘food sovereignty’ whereby people have some element of control over what they eat and how it’s grown, and it must have a sense of respect for producers and consumers - a respect which is conspicuously absent in the current set-up.

Mike Small, Scotland’s Local Food Revolution

Our Customers

For many of our customers, whether in-store or through the Veg Box scheme, we are more than a source of food, we're helping to support and grow a community around food issues. Our social impact survey found that **79%** of respondents felt their involvement made them more connected to the origins of food, and **63%** felt more connected to social environmental movements or food politics.

The survey also highlighted that for many customers we provide support for a change in diet - in some cases towards vegetarian or vegan diets, but more often towards a desire to eat more fruit and veg, and to support more ethical methods of production.

The VegBox Facebook Page and weekly newsletter give people a chance to overcome fears about trying new types of veg, something many people experience, as well as tips on coping with seasonal gluts, using methods such as pickling and preserving. **45%** of customers reported wasting less produce than when shopping from other sources.



“I want to award everyone connected with Locavore (quite a band now) the ecological equivalent of a gold medal, or failing that a massive hug and heartfelt “thank you” for their vision and optimism, for being such a persuasive showcase for an alternative, wholly appetising, sane food system that might just save us from ourselves.”

Joanna Blythman, [The Herald](#)

Our Community

As a Community Interest Company, Locavore exists to benefit a community rather than to make a profit for shareholders, freeing us to support a wider range of projects than a regular business might, including through the customer funded Initiatives Fund.

One of the most prominent activities supported by the Initiatives Fund is the Good Food Fund, which customers donate to in-store or alongside their regular or supplemental veg box orders. Currently supporting 10 partner agencies working with people facing food crises, the amount customers donated during lockdown rose by **270%** between January and May, enabling us to provide increased levels of support in the form of fresh fruit and vegetables. In total, the Good Food Fund provided **£30,000** worth of fresh fruit, veg and ready meals from our kitchens this year.

In addition to this ongoing support, the Good Food Fund was also able to support the Glasgow-wide Food for Good fund with a one-off donation of **£5k** in March.

Although we are lucky to be able to support these projects, we share many of our customer’s frustration that this is only a sticking plaster over the wider issues of inequalities in the food system, and this year were were signatories to a campaign by Food Workers For Food Justice calling for safe and dignified access to food for all.



“Thank you for growing the market for all of our products - the more you grow, the more of us can grow and produce ethically!”

Denise Walton, [Peelham Farm](#)

Our Economic Impact

Our social impact survey told us that **88%** of customers put supporting local producers as the most important reason for shopping with Locavore, and we can demonstrate that even making small shifts in spending can have a big impact.

Working in partnership with some of our main suppliers and our staff, we conducted an exercise looking at what happens to every pound spent in our Govanhill shop - this found that we are regularly working with over 70 suppliers for the stock in our shop, and nearly **60%** of them are in Scotland.

Based on surveys asking suppliers and staff to identify how they allocated their own spending, we were able to calculate that **£1** spent with Locavore is worth **£1.92** to Glasgow’s economy, or **£2.36** overall to Scotland’s economy, or **£2.87** to the Scottish and Progressive economy - businesses like ours.

You can find out more about this research [here](#), but the fundamental message is if you shop with Locavore, you support a whole network of individuals and businesses who share our approach and are driving the transformation of our food system.



Producer Story: Mossgiel

People often comment that the thick layer of cream on top of Mossgiel's organic, non-homogenised milk takes them back to childhood, squabbling over who got the first pour onto their cornflakes. This isn't the only way the clock is being turned back - many of the methods being adopted by Farmer Bryce and his partner farmers mark a return to more traditional approaches.

Since he took over the family farm in 2015, Bryce has been on a mission to transform the dairy industry and challenge the dominance of mega-dairies by focussing on animal welfare, regenerative agriculture, and achieving a fair price that will enable families to continue farming for generations to come.

The milk from Mossgiel doesn't just taste better - it comes from cows that are 100% grass fed, currently spending seven months of the year out in pasture, time increasing year on year by introducing mob-grazing, moving the herd around the land to allow soil regeneration and strengthening which in turn will enable longer grazing.

We're proud to have supported Mossgiel since 2016, housing their first milk vending machine, now one of 24 across the Central Belt, supplying 18,000 litres of milk a week from a 100% single use plastic free supply chain. This market enables Mossgiel to support neighbouring farms to transition to organic, and they are currently in talks with a network of Scottish farmers aiming to introduce new standards for single-use plastic free organic milk production.

“What kept ringing in my head was something my father said a couple of weeks before he died: “Don't ever think about going organic, it'll bankrupt you within weeks, and don't even think about selling your milk direct because the big firms will just push you out the door”.

Bryce Cunningham, Mossgiel

Our Environmental Impact

This year has seen us take a massive step towards improving the environmental impact of our veg box deliveries, with addition of 5 electric vehicles this summer. We've also adopted the use of new route planning software, and in combination this has enabled us to reduce the average emission per delivery by **69%** compared to 2019.

Although we aim to support our customers in reducing the amount of waste packaging generated at home, there is still a substantial amount generated through the supply network. We use [Changeworks Waste and Recycling](#) to handle the waste from our shops and veg box depot, and on average this diverts the equivalent of **194kg** of CO₂(e) each month compared to if it had gone to landfill.

Our Social Impact survey found that **55%** of our customers were more aware of food waste as a result of shopping with us, and **81%** seek out food with less packaging.

In January our Customer Journey study found that **12%** of customers surveyed travelled from the West End to our Govanhill shop, which made it easier for us to decide to locate our second shop in Partick.



Average Monthly Deliveries

2019: 3005

2020: (Jan - Oct): **5097**

70% Increase

CO₂(e) Emissions per Delivery

2019 Average: 394.92g

October 2020: 121.49g

69% Decrease



“Feeling sorry for someone doesn’t lead them anywhere - it’s not going to help”

Matt Fountain, Freedom Bakery

Producer Story - Freedom Bakery

Freedom is a wholesale bakery based in Royston, Glasgow, supplying outlets across the region with sourdoughs and pastries. It’s also a social enterprise working to provide employment experience and training for prisoners prior to and after release.

At any one time in Scotland there are around 7,000 people in prison, often on short sentences, leading to around 35,000 leaving prison each year. When you combine the issues that lead to people offending in the first place with the stigma that is attached to employing ex-offenders, it’s maybe no surprise that around 40% of prison leavers re-offend in the first year. Freedom Bakery was established with an aim to help break that cycle by providing people with real opportunities for change, based on a philosophy of dignity.

Currently a third of Freedom’s team are people they met whilst serving a prison sentence. In addition to the security and structure that comes with a job, they operate a grant system which supports people through the first month of leaving prison, providing resources to get into a new home, and buy provisions until other forms of support kick in, and to help minimise the risk of re-offending.

Like all the businesses we work with, Freedom aren’t doing good for the sake of it, they’re about great produce, using the best ingredients - they use flour from Mungoswells, a family-run farm in East Lothian (whose flour can also be bought from us), and their milk comes from Mossgiel. We love their bread and pastries, and think they are an absolutely amazing business - and given the amount of their bread our customers buy, we think you do too.



“As we start to lift the lockdown, we must now focus on a green recovery – on retaining and building on the elements people have said they valued during lockdown: clean air, wildlife, a sense of local community, and food.

“We need to support Scottish farmers to develop the infrastructure to supply Scottish people more directly after the lockdown, from direct selling like veg boxes through to supermarkets, and to feed into our public sector.”

Aoife Behan, Soil Association Scotland

What Next?

2020 started and ended with expansion, with Locavore Renfrew Street opening in March and Locavore Partick in December. This has already taken us beyond the aims of our 2015 Big Plan, and much further towards our goal of reshaping Glasgow’s food system. In early 2021, our tenth year of business, we will publish The Bigger Plan, setting out our ideas for where we go next.

2021 is also the year that Glasgow is due to host COP26, and we will work closely with producers and partners to share our experience and show that viable alternatives to the dominant food system do exist.

We will continue the work started with the Impact Project, building our understanding of the role we play in people’s lives by working with our customers and communities to better understand their needs, and using that to demonstrate to policy makers that rather than being a problem, food businesses can provide solutions to many of the problems we face.

Whatever else 2021 throws at us, whether Brexit or Covid, we feel optimistic that we are heading into a more sustainable, fairer, and more delicious future, and hope you can share the journey with us.



Keep in touch:

Facebook: [@GlasgowLocavore](#)

Instagram: [@Locavore_CIC](#)

Twitter: [@GlasgowLocavore](#)

Shop with us:

Locavore Govanhill

349 Victoria Road, G42 7SA

Locavore Partick

449 - 455 Dumbarton Road, G11 6EJ

Locavore Renfrew Street

134 Renfrew Street, G3 6ST

Thank you!

This report includes highlights of research conducted as part of the Impact Research Project, which was funded by a grant from the Halleria Trust and supported by the Real Farming Trust through their [LEAP](#) funding programme and Coventry University's Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience.

We'd like to thank our customers, suppliers and staff for taking part in this and many other aspects of the project, giving up their ideas, their time and their information to support us.