**Where Next For The Community Food Movement?**

*This piece is the product of many musings and discussions, of many hours of leaning on the garden fork. Its purpose is to attempt to bring some of these individual and collective ponderings together, as a tool to prompt myself and hopefully others active in “community food projects” to reflect, analyse, even discuss, where we are, where we want to get to, how we might set off to get there, and who’s bringing the sandwiches.*

Over the last decade or so in the UK, significant numbers of activists have dedicated much time and energy to developing community gardens, forest gardens, permaculture growing sites, foraging schemes; and community-led food distribution systems such as community cafes, kitchens, food co-ops, box schemes and market stalls. For the purposes of this essay, these initiatives are defined as *Community Food Projects* (CFPs). CFPs are practical, small-scale initiatives, organized at the very local level, around the issue of food. Most are centred around, or involve, food growing, and many have a variety of functions (e.g. Growing Communities in Hackney run a box scheme, farmers market and urban market gardens) or close symbiotic relationships with other CFPs delivering complementary functions (e.g. OrganicLea’s market stall supplies the café of the Hornbeam Centre in Walthamstow, which is the office base of Common Sense Growers, a garden outreach and support project)

They are often, but not exclusively, urban, and the vast majority practice organic horticulture. Some operate from squatted or privately owned land/ premises, most are based on public property; most have fairly precarious “security of tenure” in a legal sense, often without a contract of any kind: in 2010, half of Growing Communities’ urban market gardens are being shut down and moved to make way for capital projects decreed by their landlords, Hackney council. For activists, they offer a critique of, and an alternative to, the dominant – capitalist - method of production and distribution of a central basic need, food; however, one powerful beauty of CFPs is that they can simultaneously address a multitude of social, environmental and economic issues, for example social inclusion, biodiversity and nutrition. In an historical context CFPs can be seen as part of the rich tradition of self-help and mutual aid, alongside credit unions, breakfast clubs, co-operative societies and barn-raising, which enable individuals and communities to survive the inhuman effects of capitalism in the now, whilst constructing a set of steps which enable us to climb and view a vision of a juster world.

Much has been written about the enormous benefits of CFPs at a local level. However, the purpose here is to stand back and ask questions about CFPs’ broader socio-political impact: What have been our achievements to date? And, assuming that these achievements have at best gone only a small way to achieving CFPS’ ultimate objectives, what do CFPs need to do accelerate progress towards these?

**Achievements of CFPs**

First, it is important to assert and affirm the notable successes of CFPs over the last fifteen years. Their numbers have multiplied and are now thousands-strong, demonstrating enduring active involvement. Few towns are now without at least one CFP. This has had the direct impact of hundreds of acres of vulnerable land being brought into collective organic cultivation, producing, with minimal inputs, thousands of tonnes of fresh produce consumed with low food miles and little adulteration. CFPs that act as distribution hubs for commercial organic growers have ensured the survival of many exemplary small-scale growers, and provided satisfying and socially useful local jobs.

At the micro-level, the benefits for physical and mental health and well-being are, as previously stated, well-documented and demonstrate again that CFPs are meeting otherwise unmet needs. Meanwhile, CFPs’ ability to bring members of different communities (ethnic/ generational/ class/ interest) together to share their food growing and preparing traditions on an equal, respectful footing is a micro-level achievement in a ‘multi-cultural society’ whose multiple cultures often keep/ are kept separate, resulting in mutual suspicions and resentments increasing in many areas of life.

As with all social phenomena, the recent surge in interest around food issues, and especially in organically and locally produced food, has multiple causes but we should never neglect the importance of human agency: campaigning organizations have played a vital role and so too have CFP activists who have physically demonstrated that “another world is possible”*.* Too often we talk about being the beneficiaries of this zeitgeist without recognizing that *we are the creators.*

CFPs have achieved a tremendous “reach”, extending to many established institutions such as schools, housing associations, community associations, public health bodies and councils, all of whom have, in countless cases, literally bought in to CFPs as a means of delivering multiple requirements. In a very real sense we have won the argument – “the struggle for hegemony” [dominant ideas]– in civil society. However, because CFPS are accepted as having some benefit does not, obviously, mean that the broader critique of capitalism that catalysed many CFPs has been accepted or even examined.

Given all this, we can say that CFPs are effecting positive developments at the local level, and that this has already had a bottom-up impact at a national level, altering the behaviour of individuals, consumers, corporations and statal/ para-statal bodies, beginning to manifest themselves in medium-term buying/ marketing/ procurement policies for the latter, e.g. commitment to gardening projects and local/ organic meal sourcing at many schools.

However for CFPs to have a greater, more direct impact, three steps are required: first, there needs to be, within and between CFPs, dialogue as to what kind of generalized social changes CFPS should be embodying and pursuing, and appropriate strategies for achieving these i.e. the conscious development of theory and praxis: we will look at why this is the case later on.

Second, that the more focused pressure exerted by a more conscious articulation of CFPs’ vision and strategy be intensified by acting in concert as a self-determined movement. And thirdly, that CFPs act in concert with others as part of a broader movement that confronts the bio- and social crisis. Below is offered an analysis of where CFPs currently stand in relation to these three steps, and an identification of potential developments.

**Theory and Praxis: Philosophical Currents Within CFPs and their Implications**

 As with any movement that achieves some degree of growth and success, we find ourselves faced with a new set of questions. Previously, picking up a spade to cultivate an unloved, threatened piece of urban soil was a radical act in itself; the notion of taking the fringe idea of CFPs into the mainstream of schools, community centres, parks, allotments and housing estates was a utopian vision. We have come a long way: now CFPs are on the map, they are required to elaborate the character of CFPs and the position they occupy in relation to wider society/ economy. Because if we don’t, others will do so on our behalf.

There are currently four main identifiable philosophies or positions implied or enacted within CFPs. Each position interprets CFPs in a particular way, and in doing so ascribes differing trajectories that, if followed, would see CFPs as projects and as a movement adopting widely diverging strategies for social change. These are: Reaction, Retreat, Reform and Revolution: all are briefly illustrated below.

It is not the intention here to stake out ideological divisions within the movement, merely to point out that, at this stage in its development, everyday choices and tactics will affect which trajectory CFPs tend towards. This is not to dispute that there is a richness and a strength in CFPs engaging in a diversity of arenas and levels, merely to point out that fellow travellers require a shared sense of direction.

**Reaction**

CFPs have been identified, by commentators more than participants, as ‘going back to the way things were’. Certainly, CFPs may well be repossessing some of the more desirable attributes of past times, for example face-to-face relations, seasonal eating and a “slower pace of life”. Connecting with a widespread interest in “heritage” can be fertile ground, and can help to transform this interest into one that is not merely concerned with the preservation of artifacts, but with how the retained information can be put to productive use in the pursuit of a better society now and in the future: witness Brighton Permaculture Group’s success in renovating old orchards, and planting new ones with traditional Sussex cultivars.

There is nothing wrong with a cosy sense of nostalgia and a belief in tradition in so far as these do not present obstacles to genuine social and environmental resuscitation.

However, the problematic with giving succor to backward-looking parochialism is that there are those who would use our work to further an idealization, and movement to return to, the social make-up and relations of the historic agrarian society. These can be caricatured thus: conspicuously wealthy large landowners as unaccountable bosses to armies of rural workers leading lives of drudgery and living in poverty. Further, there are those that approve of the relocalisation of food production because this means bolstering the position ofrural capitalist exploiters/ chemical polluters/ animal torturers merely because they have the virtue of being local/ British not foreign.

We need to ensure that CFPs keep a good garden fork’s length between themselves and reactionary ideas that lead towards a return to feudalism, nationalism and xenophobia, all of which spell a reversal of the social and material gains of the last century, and contradict the social goals of CFPs. We need to go forward, not back, to the land.

**Retreat**

Amongst the myriad of immediate benefits offered by CFPs is that of preserving traditional skills and reskilling, notably in crafts such as vegetable and fruit production and preparation, herbal medicine, low-impact building and other sustainable technologies. A community-minded appreciation of this regards this widespread reskilling as essential for the building of self-reliant communities capable of co-operatively constructing organic solutions to the bio- and social crisis, now and in the future.

However in “green” circles, there has been a growing tendency to be distracted from this collective aspiration, by a narrowed focus on individual or family survival. At workshops, for instance, it is not unusual to hear “*I* need to be able to feed *myself* come [peak oil/ climate change]”; anecdotally, a number of ‘leading’ environmentalist figures have secured their own private ‘bolt-holes’ for when the crises hit meltdown. Even if such individual survival strategies represent only a “Plan B” in peoples’ minds, they inevitably have the effect of weakening the inclusive, co-operative strategies that CFPs in many ways embody, and which, after all, are the only realistic way out of this mess, and certainly the only way worth fighting for.

When push comes to shove, defending your allotment plot or smallholding against businessmen-turned-warlords, armed mercenaries and desperate mobs is a hopeless cause in every sense. Communities working together to sustainably meet the needs of all from available resources proffers the only desirable, and probably the only feasible, long-term route out of the worsening bio- and social crisis.

**Reform**

Ultimately, so many debates within progressive social movements hinge on the question of whether the prime objective is small or piecemeal changes within existing structures and institutions (Reform), or fundamental transformation of these structures and institutions (Revolution). These are the strongest two currents within CFPs at present.

Mention has been made of how CFPs have moved from the “fringes” to the “mainstream”. Reformists would celebrate this “mainstreaming” as an unqualified success, and contest that the more mainstream CFPs can become, the more successful/ effective they are/ will be. Revolutionaries will welcome improvements in the here and now, and further assess whether certain changes may have helped or hindered progress towards addressing root causes of the problems.

Some illustrative examples of ‘political successes’ that reformists might celebrate and revolutionaries would question, include celebrity/ politicians’ endorsements of local food projects and campaigns; supermarkets increasing their range of organic and local produce and stocking ‘Grow Your Own’ windowsill kits; ‘landshare’ projects where wealthy landowners charitably lend out a tiny portion of their land to individuals or CFPs; corporations’ funding of CFPs in return for political capital; and venture capitalists moving into the business of vegebox schemes.

In these instances can be glimpsed the devil’s pact of the reformist. If any move that raises the resource base or profile of a CFP is an unqualified good, then these small steps become ends in themselves, to the detriment of longer-term radical objectives, This allows the existing exploitative social structures to concede some ground in order to co-opt CFPs. CFPs, now with a stake in the system, are disabled from radically critiquing it, and finally, cruelly, can be set up as oppositional to those unaccomodated elements who would uphold such a critique.

To take an example, in 2012 the Olympic Games, whose key sponsors are Coca-Cola and McDonalds, two major corporate protagonists of the destructive food system, will be centred around the Lea Valley, home of Hackney Tree Nursery & Forest Garden. It would be highly problematic for the Tree Nursery to enter into direct partnerships with London 2012 and by association Coke and McDonalds, as this enables the corporates to present themselves as not part of the problem but part of the solution as a CFP supporter, and the driver of [local food] solutions because of their powerful economic position: the social relations that underscore its powerful economic position are thus reinforced rather than undermined.

**Revolution**

For CFPs, two cases of revolutionary thought and action may be useful in illuminating how a movement that is essentially orientated around small changes can maintain a revolutionary perspective. First, the case of Spain. In recent history, ‘revolutionary moments’, where the old order is toppled through mass action, have followed a pattern whereby the original mass actions are decentralized, participative, democratic and emancipatory – essentially, *anarchic*, in character. The ensuing seizure of state power by an elite or centralized organization acting in the name of the people limits the possibilities for social transformation, and heralds the rapid formation of new hierarchies (which may be assessed as “relatively progressive” vis-à-vis the old order, or equally tyrannical or worse).

Spain in 1936/37 is widely held up as an example of a revolutionary moment, or ‘orgasm of history’, which is extended over a long enough period to demonstrate how a free, co-operative, needs-based society might function. In the face of the fascists’ military onslaught, many areas of Spain were run by workers committees in industry, neighbourhood committees in residential areas, agricultural collectives in the countryside, and peoples’ militias in defence.

The mistake is to view this turn of events as a spontaneous emergence of new forms of organization. In reality, the revolutionary moment in Spain was able to hatch such a society, because that it had been gestating for many years in the shell of the old order. For decades, anarchist activity in the workplace and neighbourhoods had created a culture and institutions that understood self-organisation and mutual aid, and practiced them. This reinforced an older established culture of peasant co-operation and collectivization.

As is more fully explored in “The Four Tasks” (see Bibliography), other orgasms of history failed to endure *because* they were largely spontaneous uprisings, without the evolved culture, structures and institutions through which a self-managed society could be organized. In this context, CFPs can be regarded as vital for the success of the revolutionary project, building widespread communal control and organization of food production and distribution *in the now*. However, revolutionaries might argue, the degree to which CFPs fulfill this role depends on two factors: first, whether the *means* by which CFPs and CFP networks organize represent *‘the ends in the making’* i.e. to what extent do CFPs embody the principles of liberty, equality and solidarity; to what extent do they *de-enclose*  the commons?

In particular, how are decisions and plans made? And how are ‘the spoils’ – be they money, produce, or acclaim – distributed? CFPs organize themselves in various ways- from ad hoc groups to social enterprises to charitable trusts. The objectives of being ‘democratic’ and ‘not-for-profit’ are universally and sincerely held, but attempts to develop ways of working that are inclusive, empowering and just within a largely hostile economy requires constant vigilance. It is presumably the case that that some structures and patterns of organization are more resilient in the long term to external pressures, for example to centralize, form hierarchies or become profit-making organizations.

Second, and relatedly, whether CFPs are part of an *alternate-*culture or a *counter*-culture. The former culture is one capable of co-existing with the present system, whilst the latter implies an antagonistic relationship with capitalism. One salient antagonism here is that of *land,* and the entitlement to it: a subject to which we shall return.

An established means of positioning a social movement as essentially antagonistic to capitalism can be explored within the concept of “transitional demands”. It is broadly recognized that for revolutionaries to reject any notion of improvement within the existing system is to take an impossible, and frankly ridiculous, position. Instead, transitional demands are made. These demands are designed to deliver direct improvements *whilst* strengthening the hand of the revolutionary movement, *and* maintaining a thorough critique of established structures, simultaneously illuminating their contradictions in the process.

The concept of transitional demands is certainly not without its frailties when put into action in the complex terrain of social struggles, but remains a useful tool here. An example of a transitional demand might be that CFPs be granted secure tenures of land, or that authorities are required to find land for a constituted group of people wishing to grow food together for wider community benefit. In the current climate, these are radical but not unrealistic demands, that would strengthen the hand of CFPs, and are potentially antagonistic to capitalist development in their realisation of communities’ right to grow food over and above commercial interests.

**Land: A Revolutionary Demand?**

As mentioned at the beginning, virtually all CFPs are in a non-ideal situation when it comes to that most precious resource, land. Their entitlements to their plots are at best protected by the Allotments Acts if they are on an allotment site – and this is by no means the most robustly enforced bit of legislation; or they exist by virtue of a currently supportive, tolerant, or merely distracted landlord: few have formal contracts beyond the annual allotment agreement, let alone leases or freeholds. CFPs have a resourceful tendency to make the most of whatever bit of space is offered, but they deserve better than sites whose social and horticultural potential is often severely restricted. The recent trend in North London for the provision of short-life “plots” constructed of readily mobile building sacks or skips is, in many ways, to be welcomed: but it also epitomizes an approach that casts community food growing as a disposable event that can temporarily fill a space in transition, not a permanent *right* to relate long-term to the earth under our feet.

Thus, we are all dogged and restricted by the reality of not controlling our patch of ground, and the possibility that our steady developmental work, our planting of fruit trees metaphorically and literally, may be taken from us at short notice due to some shift of priority, policy or economy ‘higher up’. CFPs would greatly benefit from better access to better land, and improvements in entitlement to that land: for a CFP movement to grow, these are prerequisites.

A more land-conscious CFP movement would confirm it as a counter-culture. Though in contemporary discussions on politics and economics the issue of land is veiled behind abstractions such as ‘property’ and ‘resources’, the fact remains that land (and people to work it) remains the source of all wealth and is guarded jealousy by the haves from the have-nots. Concentration of land in the hands of the corporations, the super-rich and the military-industrial complex not only ensures their continued enrichment, it also creates a passive and divided army of worker-consumers. Questioning the current distribution of land is questioning the fundamental forces that underpin and reproduce a society driven by profit not need.

In the 1990s, *The Land Is Ours (TLiO),* a UK land rights movement, appeared in the ascendancy, producing regular bulletins whilst under their banner several spectacular direct actions took place. Activity in the 21st century has primarily been through Chapter 7 – ‘TLiO’s planning wing’ – who produce the excellent quarterly journal *The Land*, and offer advice to individuals and communities struggling for land rights where they can. At present Chapter 7 and *The Land* tend to be centred around rural issues: could CFPs connect with this current and help reassert the land question through ongoing activity in centres of population?

The above example casts CFPs as a movement that is capable of speaking and acting in concert. Whilst it is possible to conceive of CFPs as a diffuse movement, such accord is certainly not realized. This is not surprising, given that CFPs are all about practical projects getting things done: for many, they are the antidote, or at least balance, to the world of work and politics and their abstract tasks, meetings and networks. But are there any instances to date of inter-CFP co-operation for common, practical goals, which might suggest possibilities for united action around land, or other issues, or any that might be envisaged?

**On Connecting and Uniting CFPs**

There exist a number of national organizations who provide networks, information, resources and support for CFPs. These include National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (NFCFCG); Permaculture Association of Britain (PAB); Garden Organic; Soil Association; SUSTAIN and Womens Environmental Network (WEN). They have reasonably open decision-making structures and could be made more use of by CFPs on the ground. However, they represent wider and different interests; they are restricted to a degree by their charitable status; they have central national offices and are therefore some way away from “the ground”; and they are advocacy organizations set up to promote knowledge but not to “be” a movement, which by definition has to develop organically from the grassroots, starting with local connections. Building regional permaculture networks, based as permaculture is on the simple, profound ethics of “earth care, people care, fair shares”, is one priority.

Local connections are made on a regular basis, over issues such as sourcing goods, health and safety policies etc. Most CFPs have open events which provide good potential for informal networking. Perhaps it is the nature of the work that connections between CFPs centre around practical day-to-day issues: occasional spaces also need to be opened up to explore and share the visions and ideals that drive participants. Below is examined the case of one loose CFP network that has shown signs of making the critical move from, to paraphrase Marx, a network in itself to a network *for* itself.

In late 2007 a number of CFPs in North and East London converged for a day under the banner of ‘Urban Food Growers’ Network’ (UFGN). It was a successful day in terms of sharing ideas, successes and challenges, yielding an e-mail list mainly used for promoting different groups’ events, helping to marginally increase contact between groups. The second co-ordinated event was the Lammas bike ride – a social harvest tour of 9 growing CFP sites. In November 2009, UFGN London were one of 12 European organizations (the other UK organization being Gardening and Permaculture Society Manchester) to call for the ‘Resistance Is Ripe’ Day of Action on Agriculture on December 15th in Copenhagen, to coincide with, and oppose the COP15 inter-governmental climate talks.

**Connecting with a Broader Movement – Who and How?**

Throughout the week of COP15, the “London Growers – Soil Not Oil” banner was to be seen on a number of demonstrations and actions, and a grower-based affinity group participated in the “Reclaim Power” mass civil disobedience. What can be seen here is the potential for CFPs, once they have gone from local networks to loose organizations, to quickly and naturally form alliances with radical social movements.

The Climate Justice movement in particular, with its attentiveness to real alternatives to the current system, provides a fertile opportunity for CFPs, who can offer solidarity and energy but also something very real – a sustainable and just food system that has been germinating in preparation for “system change not climate change”. In doing so, CFPs (re)define themselves as a revolutionary movement-within-a-movement, and begin to occupy more fundamental roles.

For example, at the Klimaforum (alternative climate forum) during COP15, the peoples’ kitchen was run by Mycorrhizae, the Swedish *Reclaim The Fields (RTF)* group, serving nourishing vegan food for activists from their homegrown vegetables, for donation. This firmly embeds their CFP activity within a counter-culture and increases the self-reliance of the movement, enabling it to produce affordable food from within its own ranks.

RTF are a European network aiming to “create alternatives to capitalism through co-operative, autonomous, real needs-orientated, small-scale production and initiatives” and “link local practical action with global political struggles”. As such, they may well provide a good reference point for CFPs seeking to reassert their role as an oppositional force and help each other to make the decisive shift from CFPs as an implicit to explicit movement.

RTF are affiliated to Via Campesino (VC), a worldwide organization with 148 [network/ organization] members in 69 countries. Their ‘principal objective’ is “to develop solidarity and unity among small farmer organizations in order to promote gender parity and social justice in fair economic relations, the preservation of land, water, seeds and other natural resources, food sovereignty, sustainable agricultural production based on small and medium sized producers.”

Stronger connections with VC may be one way to achieve the objective of internationalism and solidarity with community food workers in the global south, where food production remains very much a way of life for many, where traditional sustainable food systems still exist but are increasingly threatened by the penetration of agribusiness, and where the effects of capitalism and its attendant crises are often most keenly felt. However, VC is an organization of and for farmers, raising a question of identity for CFPs.

Due to various historical processes (especially the Enclosures, industrialization of agriculture and lack of land reform) in the UK farmers are mainly large scale rural capitalists and/or socially isolated, as opposed to more agrarian societies where farmers are numerous and have small means of production, in many cases close to subsistence. Having conceptualized “farmers” in the VC definition as, essentially, peasants, the question is, is this a class position that CFP activists occupy, identify with or aspire to? Here again we return to issues around land rights and distribution.

CFP members engaged in packing and cooking probably don’t, and at present most CFP growers are, at most, only just beginning to make a significant economic contribution to their lives (food or cash), whilst many more do not even aspire to that level of production as a primary objective. Others may be, but work for a wage from their organization rather than the market value of their produce, and therefore may, objectively and subjectively, be considered a worker. However, what we are seeing across the UK on allotments and CFPs is, albeit on a minor scale, the renaissance of the peasant mode of production alongside the existing, dominant capitalist mode. This entails the weakening of the working class, but also of the capitalist class, resulting in a fractious, more complex class picture, opening up new arenas for autonomy, struggle and organization.

Other ways in which internationalism can be practically expressed include “twinning” schemes with urban agriculturalists overseas, and the various methods of linking, communication and sharing information and inspiration via the internet. Meanwhile, the Transition Network is another fast growing national-international network with radical potential that clearly has a role for CFP involvement.

This in no way implies taking our eyes off the ball in terms of local connections and issues, which, after all, are our strength and heartland. Continuing to build CFPs’ capacity for cross-cultural dialogue – inter-generational, inter-ethnic, inter-class – is vital in this regard. Let’s keep the produce, seed, recipe and information exchange going, in the face of the xenophobia, mistrust and alienation stirred up to divide us. Let’s keep asking how we can circumvent prejudice and other barriers to meet on an equal footing, at soil and street level, with other communities, including the “harder to reach” white working class, whose connection with a nourishing food culture is often most tenuous.

**Back to the Garden: Self and Society; People, Plants and Politics**

Many of us immersed ourselves in CFPs to give ourselves and our peers a bridge between ideals and reality; a *demonstration* that is also a grounding, healing space, and one that ‘keeps it real’: keeps us in direct contact, at ground level, with not only ideas and ideals but also with people and nature around us. By this yardstick we have achieved great things: we could always get better at the actual work but, as Graham Bell once quipped, “plants are easy, it’s people that are complicated”.

Many of us also immersed ourselves in CFPs partly in a bid to build bridges that spanned ghettos – such as from the ‘green activist’ ‘ghetto’ to the ‘muslim women’ ‘ghetto’ to the ‘youth underclass’ ‘ghetto’ – seeing in CFPs the opportunity to put ideals into practice in a way that is easily accessible to a much wider constituency because food and the outdoor environment touch everyone’s life. But in the same way that many of the generation of ‘60s activists who embarked on the “Long March Through the Institutions” became *institutionalised* – ie. the institutions changed them more than they managed to change the institutions – there is the very real possibility that “The Long March Through The Communities/ Up The Garden Path” is endless and fully absorbent of our vision, our*selves.* This won’t necessarily be the worst thing that could happen: we will have a great time, and plant CFPs firmly in the cultural landscape of the UK, greatly enriching our soil and people for generations to come. But all it takes is for us to periodically “only connect” the CFP work with the ‘bigger picture’, to make what we are doing so much more potent, useful, revolutionary.

The question here is, not just how to build viable, ecological, just food systems, nor how to better meet with the myriad diversity of social groups on the terrain of community food, but, to quote Precarias a la Deriva, how to do this without “falling into the gap between life and politics”; how to “reconnect with others in equality without losing the ‘starting from oneself’”.

 **Backword**

As originally stated, the purpose of this essay is to encourage reflection, analysis and discussion, and not to postulate any firm conclusions or proposals. But it feels like a few tentative suggestions as to immediate ways forward might be a good way to sign off, so here goes:

Celebrate your, our achievements. Together, with other CFPs. Find an excuse – May Day, Harvest festival, Seedy Sunday etc. – to do this.

What does community food work mean to you? Air your dreams and fantasies. If necessary, create supportive, structures forums for doing this.

Myth make! Invent an umbrella group for CFPs, permaculturalists and avante-gardeners in your bio-region

Be more forthright about land rights. Let’s stop being shy about it: we have the right to greater control over the land we are working. Join forces to defend and assert this right.

Plan to grow/ make more food for political events and happenings as well as the usual outlets.

Do something to internationalise your work.

Grow something you love, and something your neighbours love.

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