

DARWIN COLLEGE

Sustainable and Ethical Catering Statement

Aim

1. This statement lays down the College's approach towards sustainable and ethical catering practices and management. In particular it:
 - a. states the College's aspirations to minimise the impact of its catering operations on the environment;
 - b. states how the College intends to promote sustainable and ethical practices and consumption; and
 - c. guides the Meals Committee in its duty to provide advice to the Domestic Bursar on policy relating to meals and the conduct of the kitchen.

Background

2. The Catering Department at Darwin College not only has to provide a varied menu for a diverse international membership but also must do so on a limited budget. With over 600 students from 60-70 countries there is a requirement to provide, at every meal, something that everyone can eat.
3. That food is subsidised by not reflecting kitchen staff salaries and other overheads (such as gas and electricity costs) in meal prices. Neither does the College charge a fixed, termly, Kitchen Fixed Charge which can place a disproportionate burden on irregular diners.
4. In order to reduce costs the College is part of consortium of Cambridge colleges in order to bring collective bargaining power to food purchases. This approach allows us to buy better quality products for less and gives us access to ethical providers and sustainable products. Sourcing and providing such food is important to the College and this statement begins that process formally.

Current approach

5. We subscribe the following sustainable and ethical procurement standards:
 - a. we continue to maintain the highest environmental health and hygiene standards. We currently rate 5/5 after the latest inspection;

- b. wherever possible in existing planned menus we use sustainably sourced produce using guidelines from organisations including:
 - i. the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
 - ii. the Marine Conservation Society and (MCS)
 - iii. RSPCA Assured (formally Freedom Foods);
 - iv. Sustainable Fish Cities.
- c. we use only vegetable and sunflower oils for cooking in order to reduce the amount of saturated fats in the food we provide;
- d. we always offer vegetarian alternatives to meat;
- e. we offer vegan lunches two to three times a week;
- f. we only use free-range eggs;
- g. we will seek to reduce the use of meat from ruminant animals such as cows and sheep;
- h. we promote Fair Trade products in all our outlets;
- i. we source meat, vegetables and fruit locally whenever possible; and
- j. we compost (as opposed to land-fill) food waste.

Specific aspirations

- 6. The following are specific short-term¹ aims:
 - a. achieve Fair Trade accreditation;
 - b. to investigate and trial ways of reducing the sodium levels in our food;
 - c. to investigate ways of reducing our carbon footprint;
 - d. providing a 'healthy option' meal.
- 7. The following are specific long-term² aspirations:

¹ We define 'short-term' as in the next one to two academic years.

² 'Long-term' aspirations point the way success in short-term aims will take us and are, firstly, usually dependent on success in those aims and secondly, something that we assess will take us at least 3 years to achieve.

- a. only to serve free-range chicken;
- b. to reduce the use of ruminant animals;
- c. always to offer a vegan alternative;
- d. to offer low-sodium meals; and
- e. to use suppliers that use biodegradable and not petroleum-based packaging

Publicity, review and reporting

8. All members of the College and its staff are welcome to comment on this statement. Comments should be addressed to Domestic Bursar for consideration by the Meals Committee.
9. This statement is a living document and is a 'snapshot' of the College's sustainable and ethical catering practices at the time it is published. It is subject to regular review and amendment to reflect both progress and changing aspirations.

Caveat

10. It is accepted that any statement such as this cannot exist in a vacuum and must be subject to financial realities. In particular:
 - a. the College's ability to subsidise catering operations will continue to be subject to financial constraints;
 - b. the College needs to be a member of vehicles such as the colleges' food purchasing consortium in order to maximise value for money; and
 - c. the international nature of the College means that a wide variety of foods needs to be offered to diners in order to ensure that everybody can eat something at every meal.

GLOSSARY AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Healthy option

A meal that is low in sodium, low in fats and high in fibre and contains no processed meat.

Local:

Produced sourced from East Anglia and the East Midlands, with an emphasis on being as close to Cambridge as possible.

Marine Conservation Society (MCS):

“The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) is the voice for everyone who loves the sea. We work to secure a future for our living seas, and to save our threatened marine wildlife before it is lost forever. Almost nowhere in UK seas is marine wildlife safe from harm. We need to establish vital marine protected areas where wildlife can recover and flourish.

Levels of beach litter have doubled over the last two decades. MCS works to clear our seas of the rising tide of rubbish that is so dangerous to sea life, including seabirds, whales and dolphins.

71% of Europe's fish stocks are overfished or depleted. Once common fish such as skate and cod are now rare in many areas. MCS works to reduce the overfishing which is devastating the life in our seas, and promotes sustainable seafood alternatives.

Our work ensures that the sea's rich wildlife can be restored, fish stocks grow more plentiful, and our beaches and seawater become cleaner.”

<http://www.mcsuk.org/information/About+MCS>

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC):

“The Marine Stewardship Council is an international non-profit organisation established to address the problem of unsustainable fishing and safeguard seafood supplies for the future.

Our vision is for the world's oceans to be teeming with life – today, tomorrow and for generations to come. A sustainable seafood market is crucial to making this vision a reality.

We use our blue MSC label and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans. We want to transform the seafood market by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices and influencing the choices people make when buying seafood. We work with fisheries and businesses around the world to achieve this mission."

<https://www.msc.org/about-us/what-is-the-msc>

RSPCA Assured (formerly Freedom Foods)

The RSPCA is the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals:

"RSPCA Assured, previously Freedom Food, is the RSPCA's ethical food label dedicated to farm animal welfare.

Our vision is for all farm animals to have a good life and be treated with compassion and respect.

The RSPCA Assured label makes it easy to recognise products from animals that have had a better life, so you can feel good about your choice when shopping and eating out.

If there's an RSPCA Assured label on the packaging of the eggs, fish and meat that you buy, you know the farms - and everyone else involved in the animals' lives - have been assessed and meet RSPCA animal welfare standards.

You may see the Freedom Food logo until May 2016 as companies have packaging to use up."

<https://www.rspcaassured.org.uk/about-us>

Ruminant animals:

Lamb and cattle.

Sustainable Fish Cities:

"Sustainable Fish Cities is an initiative conceived and supported by an alliance of not-for-profit organisations already working on sustainable seafood issues. Some also run advisory or support services that can help businesses to develop sustainable seafood policies and practices.

We want to create the first ever Sustainable Fish City, or hopefully Cities - to show what can be done if people and organisations make a concerted effort to change their buying habits. Find out more about [the targets we aim to reach](#) before we declare a Sustainable Fish City.

The Sustainable Fish City project began when a working group helped the organisers of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to buy only sustainable fish. Inspired by this achievement, we began to campaign to make sure all of the seafood served across London is demonstrably sustainable.

In 2014, the campaign expanded beyond London, and we are now urging towns and cities across the UK to become Sustainable Fish Cities.”

<http://www.sustainweb.org/sustainablefishcity/about>