

<b>Causeway Coast and Glens Food Network</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> December 2016</b>
<b>To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	Accelerating Our Economy & Contributing To Prosperity
<b>Outcome</b>	Encouraging business to grow and prosper
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Head of Prosperity and Place
<b>Cost: (If applicable)</b>	Up to £30,000 from the allocated budget

**The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a final overview of Year of Food and Drink activity, and outline how this will move forward into the next legacy years.**

### **Background**

Members will recall from the update provided in March 2016 that the Prosperity and Place pillar, within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, formally launched the Causeway Coast & Glens Food Network at the end of February 2016. The aim of the Network is to showcase and support the local food and drink industry, and also to support the industry through networking, training and signposting. The Network is a collective of food and drink producers, chefs and the wider food and drinks industry in the Causeway Coast and Glens area, who are passionate about the produce they grow, make and serve. The Network is used to make connections along the food supply chain, from farm to fork. In the future, it is hoped that the Causeway Coast and Glens Food Network will help build the area's reputation as a culinary destination, to go alongside our world class tourism destination.

At the end of March, Members were informed that:

- The Network was formally launched by the then Mayor (see photos 1a & 1b in Annex A).
- A web presence was established at [www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/foodnetwork](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/foodnetwork)
- An industry discussion group and a separate consumer page were set up on Facebook.
- A Twitter account was set up.
- Branding was finalised and promotional/exhibition materials purchased.
- The Network supported its member, The Chocolate Manor, who was selected from other UK producers to attend the 5th prestigious Pitch at the Palace, organised by His Royal Highness, The Duke of York. Owner of The Chocolate Manor, Geri Martin, publicised the Network with samples of network branded chocolate.
- An exhibition stand was purchased at the IFEX exhibition (a dedicated exhibition for the food, drink, retail and hospitality sector) in Belfast between 8th–10th March 2016. The Network brought along 8 of its members from the food and drink industry within the Borough to showcase their produce (see photos 2a – 2d in Annex A).

## What has been achieved from April 2016 to date:

- Social media presence on facebook.com/groups/ccagfoodnetwork - a closed group for industry discussion group – currently sits at 215 members) and twitter @ccagfood (1,336 followers). There is also a consumer Facebook page entitled ‘A Taste of the Causeway Coast & Glens’.
- Database of local producers.
- The Network is a member of Food NI and Slow Food NI. Any opportunities available through these organisations are forwarded to Network members (i.e. opportunities to promote/trade at various events etc).
- On 13th April 2016, the Network supported and presented at the North West Regional College’s, Business Breakfast Support Seminar for Food Producer’s in the Borough.
- Attended the ‘Food for Thought’, industry event, 27 April 2016 at Bushmills Distillery, organised by Council’s tourism staff. 10 network members from the food and drink industry in the Borough introduced their produce to an audience of 100 people involved in the tourism sector. The Network also provided 100 Foodie Bags of local produce to conference delegates, as well as sponsoring Trish Deseine as guest speaker at the event (see photos 3a – 3e in Annex A).
- Purchased an exhibition stand in the Food Hall at the 2016 Balmoral Show, and brought along 8 local food and drink producers from the Borough to showcase and sell their produce: (see photo 4a in Annex A).
  1. Glenballyeamon Eggs, Cushendall.
  2. Windy City Bakery, Ballymoney.
  3. Ballinteer Farm Quail, Coleraine.
  4. Lacada Brewery Co-operative, Portrush.
  5. The Gourmet Mallow Company, Limavady.
  6. The Chocolate Manor, Coleraine.
  7. Infuse Teas, Garvagh.
  8. North Coast Smokehouse, Ballycastle.
  9. Corndale Farm Chorizo, Limavady.
- In May 2016, a social media training workshop was delivered to 23 Network members.
- 2 full page colour spread in the Belfast Telegraph on 1st June 2016 entitled ‘Introducing a flavour of the Causeway Coast & Glens’, which promoted food and drink producers, markets and food tours in the Borough (see Annex B).
- Sponsorship of celebrity chefs for the cookery demonstrations at the 2016 Rathlin Sound Maritime Festival in Ballycastle and the Bushmills Salmon & Whiskey Festival.
- The Network organised 2 extra food markets incorporating cookery demonstrations and a ‘Councillor Can’t Cook, Won’t Cook’ competition. (see photo 5a in Annex A). These were held on:
  1. Saturday 20th August, Coleraine.
  2. Saturday 17 September, Coleraine.
- Food Tourism Steering Group established.

- Assisted Destination Ballycastle submit an application to the Restaurants Association of Ireland to become a best 'Foodie Destination'
- The Network provided support to 10 of its members from the food and drink sector in the Borough to submit entries to the Newsletter's 2016 Grow, Make, Eat, Drink Awards (GMED). 8 producers were shortlisted including the Network, with Ballinteer Farm Quail winning Best Artisan Food Producer and Best Food Start Up Business.
- The Network purchased an exhibition stand at the Belfast BBC Good Food Show where 10 of its members were able to sell their produce (see photos 6a – 6d in Annex A). The following businesses sold their produce at the event:
  1. Ballinteer Farm Quail, Coleraine.
  2. North Coast Smokehouse, Ballycastle.
  3. The Chocolate Manor, Coleraine.
  4. Brighter Gold, Limavady.
  5. Glenballyeamon Eggs, Cushendall.
  6. Warke's Deli, Portstewart.
  7. Islander Kelp, Rathlin Island.
  8. Corndale Farm Chorizo, Limavady.
  9. The Woman Next Door, Ballycastle.
  10. The Gourmet Mallow Company, Limavady.
- Worked jointly with Council's tourism staff to organise & promote the Causeway Coast & Glens Restaurant Week 12-20th November 2016.
- November/December 2016 issue of the NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ambition magazine (available online soon at <http://www.northernirelandchamber.com/ambition/>).
- Referred Network members to possible funding opportunities and agencies that can assist with business support including Rural Development, University of Ulster's Food & Consumer Testing Suite, NorthWest Regional College's Food Development Unit, (Foodovation).
- Publicised awards/achievements obtained by the Borough's food and drink producers e.g. Taste Awards, Street Food Awards, NI Chowder Cook Off, Blas nah Eireann Irish Food Awards, Grow Make Eat Drink Awards, Culinary Chef awards at IFEX etc.
- Introduced chefs, producers, event organisers, government agencies, funders etc. to one another.
- There has been an increase in artisan producers selling at markets in the Borough.
- The Causeway Speciality Market has grown in stall numbers from an average of 30 stalls per month to 40 per month during 2016 (45 at peak).
- Subsidising the attendance of local hoteliers and restaurateurs to attend the Belfast Christmas Market (Fri 25th to Wed 30th November 2016) to showcase their businesses and the wider Causeway Coast and Glens Area. The following businesses will be selling their produce / or information leaflets available:
  1. The Dark Hedges Hotel, Ballymoney.
  2. Cherry Blossom Bakery, Armoy.
  3. Portrush Atlantic Hotel, Portrush.

4. Lodge Hotel, Coleraine.
  5. Tony's Griddle Goods.
  6. Glenara Elite Travel.
  7. Magherabuoy Hotel, Portrush.
  8. Glens Butchers, Limavady.
  9. Brighter Gold, Limavady.
  10. Corndale Chorizo, Limavady.
  11. Causeway Coast Speciality Market.
  12. Naturally North Coast & Glens Market.
  13. Cushendall Cookery Classes.
  14. Causeway Coast Foodie Tours.
  15. North Coast Walking Tours.
- As well as the above, Causeway Coast and Glens Mini market on 5th 6th and 7th Dec at Belfast Christmas Market will be selling:
    1. Glens of Antrim Crisps.
    2. Brighter Gold gift sets.
    3. North Coast Smoke house salt pepper, vacuum packed salmon.
    4. Chocolate Manor Bars and Daily Discs.
    5. Gourmet Mallows.
    6. Dark Hedges Chutneys.
    7. Glens butchery - prepacked only.
    8. Donnelly's Bakery biscuits.
    9. My secret kitchen Popcorn factory.

There will also be information on all three food tours in the Borough, with extensive leafleting around the borough where relevant.

### **Direct Feedback from Producers**

Below are direct quotes from producers which gives a sense of what the Causeway Coast & Glens Food Network means to their business:

#### **On Exhibiting at IFEX**

*'Excellent experience. It was a valuable opportunity to test and gain experience of exhibiting under the Network umbrella and gave us an insight into what would be required and how to manage it to get the most/from it, should the opportunity ever did arise to exhibit as an individual'.*

*'We gained contacts that could help with funding opportunities.....and companies that could help reduce our supply and raw material costs'*

*'IFEX was a fantastic opportunity to network with prospective customers and consolidate trade with existing customers. It facilitates networking with other businesses. It was also an opportunity to connect with chefs and students looking for work placement and employment in the food and drink sector'*

*'In terms of marketing, it was a great opportunity to put our name out there with people working in the sector: from owners of businesses to chefs etc. Also an increase of traffic on our twitter and Facebook pages...'*

*'Would love to attend such trade exhibitions on our own but costs would be prohibitive for such a small business'.*

*'I met new suppliers who have been able to bring my costs down in terms of ingredients. I met consultants who will be able to help me source essential resources. I made contact with new packaging people which has been a huge issue for us in the past. It was extremely useful'.*

*'We are so grateful for the support. This type of practical support is exactly what we producers need and I know other areas are now very envious of the proactive work our Council is doing for us'.*

### **On Exhibiting at Balmoral Show**

*'On the basis of sales I could not afford to exhibit as we would not be able to cover the costs. However, I did recognise that many people expected us to be there and we made many valuable connections'.*

*'We made new contacts and got great feedback about our product and business idea'.*

*'I wanted to try Balmoral since I started the business but could not afford the cost of doing it on my own. Now I have a better understanding of the event'.*

*'I want to thank the Council for all the work around exhibiting at Balmoral and the promotion they've given my business... The opportunity to be part of the Network has led to an increase in turnover, and the chance to participate in events like this have been invaluable. This practical support is a great initiative for micro producers to raise our profile, to showcase alongside the bigger, well established artisan brands, and to be part of events like Balmoral that simply would not have been open to us before. By providing such proactive support the Causeway Coast & Glens Food Network has made a beneficial impact on my enterprise. Much of this is thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of the Council staff involved, and it is hugely appreciated'.*

### **On Exhibiting at the BBC Good Food Show, Belfast**

*'I sat in the Ulster Hall in January this year when they announced the BBC Good Food Show was coming to Belfast. As much as I dared to hope I could attend, I knew the cost would be way beyond me, and so, the event at the Waterfront was really one of the most exciting events my little business could take part in. Whilst I turned up and did my bit to sell the products and showcase all the great aspects of food, drink and tourism, I was a very small part in making this weekend happen. Financially my sales exceeded my expectations, but we also met potential new stockists, key influencers and hopefully some new corporate clients, for many of the producers who got involved.*

*In the weeks since the event I have secured new stockists and generated new work as a result of people picking up my product, and talking to me at the event. A large corporate order came from our presence at the show - 150 bars that will be going into hampers sent across the world for this client. Also, I was contacted by one of the celebrity chefs who hosted the super-theatre for the three days of BBC Good Food. He has placed and received his first order from us and I hope this will develop into more orders as time goes on. I could not have imagined that being at the BBC Good Food Show would open up opportunities like that. Also being at the event gave us credibility as a brand that was good enough to be showcased there.*

*It is important to note that we are the envy of all other producers and even the Council staff from other areas who were attending. So many commented how lucky we are - and we advised them we know just how important this network has become for us in such a short time'.*

## **Praise for Causeway Coast & Glens Food Network**

*'The network has been instrumental in the growth of our business. Being a member has enabled us to showcase our product directly to chefs and hospitality businesses that we had previously little access to, and to attend events that we could never have afforded on our own. We have increased our turnover as a direct result of our membership and are grateful to the Council for investing the resources that are making such a positive impact on our business.'*

*'Since joining the network and using the skills, contacts and support that the network gives to local chefs, I have found the engagement with the network team so valuable. Helping me promote local producers while showcasing great NI produce in winning Culinary Awards at IFEX.'*

*'The Food Network has been introduced at a critical time for the area and the producers within it, and has proved to be an essential and efficient organisation in providing support, market knowledge, advice and networking opportunities for many producers in the Borough. Having worked closely with the CCAG Food Network on many occasions, we and our artisan producers, have found the Network to be an invaluable business development tool for ourselves and our contacts. I would be confident in saying that the Network has quickly become a critical and essential organisation for the local food industry in the Borough, and is the envy of other neighbouring Council regions.'*

*'From the first steps of starting my tour business in May this year, there has been such fantastic support and encouragement. Joanne has an amazing ability to create links that help your business and works tirelessly to recommend marketing/sales channels that offer excellent opportunities. My business is about showcasing our fantastic local food & drink produce and the network has allowed me direct access to these producers. I am proud to be a member alongside some of the best food/drink producers in the world.'*

*For us, the CCAG Food Network has provided amazing support, opened doors and got us thinking of new ways to make our business grow. It really is an invaluable resource that we are lucky to have on our doorstep!*

*'As a tourism company, the Food Network has offered connections with the suppliers, producers and great chefs, which has allowed me to offer an even more local, authentic North Coast based tour to visitors. This, in turn, has improved my turnover, as well as increasing repeat business to the area.'*

*'Looking back since starting to produce quail eggs and meat, we certainly would not be where we're at without the CCAG Food Network. Opportunities like Balmoral Show and signposted help, when you need it, has supported us greatly.'*

## **Moving forward**

Council has yet to receive any formal direction on activities following the official Year of Food and Drink, however, given the beginnings outlined above, it would be a missed opportunity not to continue to develop the network activity which has happened so far.

Funding has been tentatively allocated towards this project for 2017-18, depending on need and outcomes, but while year one has firmly been fixed on developing the offer in tandem with Year of Food and Drink, year two and beyond will need to focus on business outcomes. Developing the businesses will also tie in with developing food as part of our tourism offering and wider landscape, not just for visitors, but for residents too.

Ultimately the ambition would be to see this network flourish beyond medium term assistance from Council, however the reality is that work like this will always require some form of mentoring or assistance from the public sector. However, the foundations have been made in this Year of Food and Drink to establish something more than just an outputs-based programme.



ANNEX A

Photo 1a - February 2016: Launch of the CCAG Food Network



Photo 1b - February 2016: Launch of the CCAG Food Network



ANNEX A

Photo 2a - March 2016: IFEX Trade Exhibition: Where Chefs Meet Producers



Photo 2b





ANNEX A

Photos 2c & 2d - March 2016: IFEX: Producers Meeting Restaurateurs and B&B owners



ANNEX A

Photos 3a & b - April 2016: Food for Thought event – Food Producers and tour guides attend.



ANNEX A

Photos 3c – 3e April 2016: Food for Thought – keynote speaker Trish Deseine





ANNEX A

Photo 4a - May 2016: Balmoral Show



Photo 5a - August 2016: Causeway Coast and Glens Food Fair – Councillor's Can't Cook Won't Cook



ANNEX A

Photo 6a - October 2016: BBC Good Food Show in Belfast. Geri Martin with First Minister Arlene Foster



Photo 6b - October 2016: Good Food Show -Brighter Gold producer Leona Kane with the Hairy Biker Chefs





ANNEX A

Photo 6c - October 2016: BBC Good Food Show Paula McIntyre browses Food Network shelves and promotes the producers stage



Photo 6d - October 2016: BBC Good Food Show Food NI Staff meeting Food Network Staff



# Introducing a Flavour of the Causeway Coast and Glens

The Causeway Coast and Glens Food Network is proud to showcase some of its finest food & drink producers from the Borough within this Buy Local feature. We also include info on our artisan markets and fabulous fun food tours. To find out more visit [www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/foodnetwork](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/foodnetwork) and join in our conversations on Twitter @ccagfood

## Local Food & Drink Producers

A truly mouthwatering and diverse range of products to tempt your palate, all locally produced!

- 📍 **Ballinteer Quail Farm** is NI's only quail farm, producing fresh local quail meat and eggs which are delicate and flavoursome, from birds which are free to fly in aviaries. Follow @BallinteerFarm
- 📍 **Braemar Farm Ice Cream** is handmade in Castlerock on the Pollock family farm in the artisan way. It's utterly scrumptious! Follow @BraemarFarm
- 📍 Grown on the outskirts of Limavady, **Brighter Gold** is NI's multi award-winning cold pressed rapeseed oil, available online, in a range of flavours. Follow @brightergold
- 📍 **Broughgammon Farm** is a forward thinking family run farm specialising in kid goat, free range rose veal and seasonal wild game. Follow @BroughgammonFm
- 📍 Pitch @ Palace attendee, **Chocolate Manor**, specialises in bespoke printed chocolate creations, for a corporate clientele and the hospitality industry. Follow @ChocolateManor
- 📍 **Corndale Farm** offers the taste of Spain, from the Roe Valley, with chorizo produced from their own herd of free range saddleback pigs. Follow @Corndalefarm
- 📍 **Country Garden Herbs** specialist herb nursery in Garvagh, grows micro herbs and greens for restaurant sector. Follow @CGardenHerbs
- 📍 Get crackin' free range eggs from **Glenballyeamon Eggs**, Cushendall. Follow @ballyeamoneggs
- 📍 **The Gourmet Mallow Company**, Limavady offers handcut squares of billowy fluffiness, which are gluten free and additive free. Follow @gourmet\_mallow
- 📍 **North Coast Smokehouse**, Ballycastle, handcrafts delicious smoke-roasted organic salmon and cold-smoked sea salt, black pepper and dulse flakes, using smoke from sustainably sourced wood chips. Follow @NCSmokehouse
- 📍 **Tonys Griddle Goods** produces traditional soda farls, potato breads, pancakes and silms made with a TWIST. Follow @tonysgriddle



Left: Ballinteer Quail farm at Ballycastle Market. Above: Banoffee flavoured marshmallows from the Gourmet Mallow Company in Limavady. Above Right: Corndale Farm chorizo.

- 📍 **Bushmills Distillery** is the oldest licensed whiskey distillery in the world. After 400 years, everything involved in the whiskey making process still takes place on the Bushmills site @BushmillsGlobal
- 📍 **Glens of Antrim Craft Ales** in Ballycastle, use only natural products, spring water and time to produce their handcrafted ale and beers. For stockists, follow @rathlinred
- 📍 **Infuse Tea Coleraine**, are taking tea drinking to a new level. Fancy Chocolate Rose or Smoke & Fire? Follow @letsinfuse
- 📍 **Lacada Brewery**, Portrush began with a father and son brewing together and grew to become a group of co-operative minded, good beer loving aficionados. For stockists, follow @LacadaBrew

## Food Tours

The food scene up in the Causeway Coast and Glens is just waiting to be tasted. Don't know where to start? Take a tour!

- 📍 **Causeway Coast Foodie Tours** offer a guided tour by private coach, which showcases some of the best local produce the Causeway Coast has to offer. Sit back, relax and savour the flavours that make this area so unique. For tour dates follow @CausewayFoodie
- 📍 **North Coast Walking Tours** holds the Ballycastle Food Tour to showcase the excellently cooked, locally grown/brewed/caught produce that Ballycastle offers all year round. Walk. Eat. Laugh. Love being in Ballycastle. For tour dates, follow @CRedmondNI

## Artisan Food Markets

Discover the tastes, sounds, smells and sights of a truly artisan market, packed with local produce.

- 📍 **Causeway Speciality Market** is held on the second Saturday of each month in Coleraine. All food produce sold is either grown, reared, brewed, pickled, baked, smoked or cooked by the stallholder. Follow @CausewayMarket
- 📍 **Naturally North Coast and Glens Artisan Market** is independently run and offers a platform for exceptional artisan food produce and high quality hand-crafted goods. Follow @NaturallyNCG

## Naturally North Coast & Glens Artisan Market Dates

- Saturday 4 June, 2 July, 6 August: Ballycastle Diamond (Ramsay Parish Centre Carpark)
- Saturday 11 June, 9 July, 13 August: Portstewart Baptist Church Carpark
- Saturday - Sunday 18-19 June: Bushmills Salmon & Whiskey Festival
- Sunday 12 June: Ballycastle Seafront
- Saturday 25 June, 30 July, 27 August: Ballymoney Castlecroft Sq
- Sunday - Monday 10-11 July, 24 July: Ballycastle Seafront
- Saturday 16 July: Cushendun Community Festival
- Sunday 17 July: Banone Tourist Complex, Limavady
- Friday - Saturday 29-30 July: Army Road Races Food Market
- Sunday 7 August: Ballycastle Seafront - Marconi Festival
- Sunday 14 August: Cushendall - Heart of the Glens Festival
- Sunday 28 August: Ballycastle Seafront (Lammas Fair)
- Monday - Tuesday 29-30 August: Ballycastle Diamond (Lammas Fair)
- Saturday - Sunday 3-4 September: Airwaves Portrush
- Sunday 11 September: European Heritage Open Day - Dunluce Castle

## Markets managed by Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

- Saturday 11 June, 9 July, 13 August: Causeway Speciality Market, the Diamond, Coleraine
- Saturday 23rd July: Food & Craft Fair, Dreamcoat Square, Limavady
- Saturday 20 August & 17 September: Causeway Coast & Glens Food Fair, the Diamond, Coleraine



Left: Broughgammon Farm and Brighter Gold rapeseed oil. Above & Right: On the food tour! Bushmills whiskey cupcake topped with a bespoke button handcrafted by Chocolate Manor. Photo: Northern Shore Photography NI