

Running an event or meeting: Recommendations for better food procurement

Introduction

This short guide outlines Cotswold Food Network's approach and recommendations when procuring food for events or meetings.

The advice is intended to help support a healthy local food economy.

We acknowledge that obtaining food for an event is not always straightforward. Not least food costs are rising, and there are many other considerations (many price related) that need to be thought through, such as:

- Determining numbers of people to cater for if your event is open to all or not pre-booked.
- the quantity of food to procure per person
- the types and quality of your refreshments
- meeting everyone's dietary needs
- whether to use a caterer or not and
- even whether to provide food in the first place.

So, while not intended to answer these considerations in detail, the recommendations below, should help to reflect what is right for you and your organisation, while not increasing expenditure nor the time and effort involved in deciding.

Importantly implementing all or most of these recommendations, should also reduce the environmental impact and support local food producers and suppliers.

Upfront:

- As an organisation that buys food or food services, agree and compile your own food procurement statement or policy. You can then use this as your guide.
- If using a caterer, use a local one and check whether they



have a sustainability or environmental policy or meet your priorities as an organisation.

- If your event is by invite or people have pre-booked (so you know how many broadly are attending), then it is better to under-cater. This will reduce leftover food because you will likely have people who withdraw late or do not come at all, meaning there is still sufficient for everyone.
- Consider what you do if you have a few leftovers. Maybe take tubs so people can take the food or pass to a local organisation (please also see the section After your event or meeting)

The refreshments themselves:

- Use food that is responsibly sourced, locally grown or made, to help reduce miles transported and provide support to local businesses.
- If you are going to provide meat, ensure it is responsibly sourced, which is likely to be more expensive, so order a lower quantity (quality over quantity).
- Provide meat and dairy free options also and ensure the plant-based options are clearly labelled.
- Ensure that you've checked in advance, attendees' dietary needs and whether any alternative food choices are required, so as not to waste food etc.
- Provide Fairtrade tea, coffee, and sugar.
- Highlight the sources of the products you have used, on your buffet display, so people know what you have used and where it is from.
- Avoid obvious defaults – if it is a meeting, do you need to supply food at all, avoid those shop bought biscuits, supply some local seasonal fruit or bakes instead.
- Ideally, use seasonal produce.
- Select a caterer with a hygiene rating of 4 or above.
- Encourage people to bring their own water bottles and ensure a water source for refilling bottles. Avoid single-use plastic bottles.

After your event or meeting:

- Have a contingency, if for some unforeseen reasons, a larger amount of food is leftover. This means having a pre-agreed organisation or venue, to take it, which



can make good and timely use of the surplus. Therefore others benefit, no food is wasted or ends up in landfill and the people running your event, are not left trying to find somewhere last-minute to pass on the food.

- Where possible, select a venue with kitchen facilities, including cutlery and crockery, which can be washed up on site.
- Ask people to bring their own mugs to meetings – this reduces the need for disposable cups and washing up.

A selection of some recommended local food suppliers:

Below is a small selection of recommended food suppliers, which operate in various parts of the Cotswolds. We have not verified these suppliers as being local, reliable and responsible but they are well regarded in that respect.

- Roots and Seeds Café and Kitchen, Cirencester. [Community - Root & Seeds](#)
- Jossier Restaurant, Cirencester. [Jossier is Coming Home | Cirencester](#)
- The Kitchen Club, Gloucestershire. [The Kitchen Club-Home](#)
- Abbey Home Farm, near Cirencester.
<https://www.theorganicfarmshop.co.uk/shop/food-from-the-farm/>
- Shop Cotswolds <https://shopcotswolds.uk/>

Please feel free to send Cotswold Food Network, details of local caterers and food suppliers that you would recommend.

Some further suggested reading:

The following are some more guides about food procurement that you might find useful:

Catering and Procurement – Sustainable Food Places

https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/resources/food_procurement_and_supply/

Sustainable Food for Event Organisers – Sustain

https://www.sustainweb.org/sustainablefood/sustainable_event_catering/

Ethical checklist for the food and beverage industry – Ethical Hub

<https://ethicalhub.co/ethical-checklist-for-food-and-beverage-industry/?srsltid=AfmBOopLgNlXmQMf7vruU5mySOvoxOtsS4lvGDYe5u4cXRKHIOUDWhBx>