



Slow Food® UK

**Slow Food UK AGM
Saturday 26 April 2008
The Riverside Hotel, Kendal, Cumbria**

Notes of the Post-AGM Informal meeting held in the afternoon

Comments from Paolo Di Croce, General Secretary, Slow Food International

The Good, Clean and Fair message was becoming stronger and stronger, attracting worldwide media and political attention.

Objectives of the movement included:

- to increase the number of members worldwide to 1 million within the next four years and become a stronger force, otherwise Slow Food will not change the food system
- to ensure that the movement becomes more accessible to all, finding ways for everyone to become a Slow Food member
- to involve young people

Paolo praised the activities of the local convivia for all their hard work and commitment to Slow Food.

More must be achieved on a national level, and the UK must become a strong organisation with greater impact.

It was Slow Food International's policy not to subsidise rich countries, rather to encourage awareness that our membership subscriptions helped subsidise membership rates and projects in poorer countries. Paolo reiterated that members should join Slow Food because they believed in Slow Food principles, and members should also be reminded of the value of the international network.

Paolo affirmed that Slow Food International must become more transparent. For the first time, the budget would be made publicly available. It would be published on the website, and also in the members' Almanac, to be published later this year.

Strategy Summary Update

Silvija Davidson talked to the attached paper 'Strategy Summary Update AGM 2008', outlining the projects and plans for the year, covering areas such as events, communications, campaigns and markets. The paper was also available on the Members' Area of the Slow Food UK website.

New financial model

Ian Pratt, Director of Finance, explained the new financial arrangement between Slow Food UK and Slow Food International, and the following points were made:

- All membership monies now belonged to Slow Food UK from which it had to pay the convivia share, publication of Snail Mail, and other management costs taken over from Slow Food International. Slow Food UK also had to pay a fixed/variable fee to International, as part of our national share of their costs worldwide. For 2008, this fee amounted to £47,000.

- Joint membership would be renamed as Family membership, and reduced slightly to £45 per annum. A £20 youth membership would be introduced shortly, as well as a £10 'on campus' e-membership. The £35 individual membership would remain the same.
- Convivia would continue to receive their portion of the membership fee: £10 for an individual subscription of £35, as before; £15 for a family membership, reduced from £18, due to the lower £45 rate. It was explained that Slow Food UK had the authority to reduce these rebates to zero, as had happened in at least one other country, but the board had decided not to take this course of action.
- Subtracting the monies allocated for Snail Mail, rebates to convivia, and the fee to Slow Food International, Slow Food UK was left in a negative position of £19,000 for 2008, highlighting the need to fundraise.
- Increasing membership was crucial to generate more funds. The break-even membership level in order to cover the convivia rebates, the cost of Snail Mail and the fee owed to Slow Food International was 3,300, but Slow Food UK should aim for 5,000 members as soon as possible in order for it to be in a more sustainable financial position.

Slow Bread

Suzanne Wynn introduced the Slow Bread campaign, which hoped to raise awareness not just of the taste and health benefits of traditionally fermented breads, but also the heritage of crafts bakers and millers in the UK. The campaign would help to demonstrate the 'added-value' of Slow Food UK.

The Terra Madre 2008 bread food community (composed of millers and bakers) would lead the campaign.

Suzanne encouraged convivia to conduct the bread survey that she piloted at the recent food festival in Exeter.

Members were referred to the following documents on the website:

- Slow Bread campaign (general information)
- Slow Bread campaign information for members
- Slow Bread survey

Heritage Orchards

Sue Miller introduced the Heritage Orchards campaign, a pilot of which had been launched by Slow Food Bedford with their Schools Heritage Apple Project.

Further details can be found on the Members' Area of the Slow Food UK website.

Snail Mail

Donald Reid, Editor, explained that *Snail Mail* was now produced, managed and distributed entirely from within the UK.

Food writers Geoff Andrews, Joanna Blythman, Matthew Fort and Laura Mason had agreed to join an editorial advisory panel.

Future plans for the newsletter included features on distinctive, regional food stories; greater coverage of food debates; mini-area guides; an ideas forum and reader offers. Advertising would be implemented in due course, used positively and sensitively as a feature of the magazine itself.

Donald appealed to convivium leaders to continue to send convivial news, which would continue to be an important element of Snail Mail. Donald also appealed to members for suitable quality photographs.

Ark of Taste

Suzanne Wynn, Chair of the Slow Food UK Ark of Taste Commission, explained that the strategy was now in place. The aim was to increase the profile of the Ark, and increase its status and visibility.

It was confirmed that the UK must find the funds to launch any presidia in the future, and there were no plans to launch new presidia in the immediate future.

Suzanne would be attending the Slow Food International Ark of Taste meeting in Italy in July. Convivia were invited to become more involved with the Ark of Taste, as explained in the attached document.

Members were strongly encouraged to refer to the following documents available on the Members' Area of the Slow Food UK website:

- List of current Ark products in the UK
- Ark strategy
- Convivium involvement
- Additional guidelines – Orchard Fruits
- Additional guidelines – Yeasted Doughs

Finally, Suzanne explained that an Ark of Taste calendar was in progress, and an appeal was made for quality photographs of Ark products.

International Youth Food Movement

University of Gastronomic Sciences students David Prior from Australia and Aine Morris from Sheffield emphasised the importance of Slow Food's fast-developing focus on youth by explaining the very real need to pass on food skills and knowledge to the next generation; they highlighted the awkward relationship most young people in the UK had with food.

Katy Davidson, the co-ordinator of the UK Youth Food Movement, encouraged as many nominations as possible from young people (under the age of 35) to represent Slow Food UK at Terra Madre in Turin in October this year.

David emphasised the need for communication, exchange and action, and encouraged the UK to lead the way in developing the International Youth Food Movement.

Plans were afoot to develop a user-generated website, and launch an international exchange programme to give young people experience working on farms, and with food communities.

Lunch

Slow Food Cumbria provided a lunch of local tastes and entertainment, thanks principally to local members Steven Doherty, once a holder of three Michelin stars as head chef at Le Gavroche, and campaigning pig farmer Peter Gott.

Members interested in finding out more about any of the topics covered above were encouraged to discuss them with their local convivium leaders, or refer to the range of documents posted in the members' area of www.slowfood.org.uk.

Fiona Richmond