

# flavour fortnight 2011

## Flavour Fortnight 2011

### Final Report

#### Background to the Project

##### How was the idea for the project developed?



Flavour Fortnight takes the concept of Scottish Food & Drink Fortnight and regionalises it. It has strong similarities with Spring Fling in that it supports a series of events run by the industry (participants) to encourage engagement with the industry by the general public (audience) – local people and tourists.

Flavour Fortnight 2010 was organised on a very small budget and was only possible because of significant goodwill from key suppliers. Despite minimal marketing outside D&G the Flavour Fortnight programme proved to be a strong tourism draw, with businesses reporting enquiries and overnight stays from people in Central Scotland and the North of England. Industry feedback included one hotel stating that food sales were up 40% during the fortnight, while food producers saw widespread benefits including new trade orders, increased sales and increased consumer awareness.

The event established D&G as one of the most proactive food areas in Scotland and Scotland Food and Drink feature the Flavour Fortnight approach as an example of best practice.

##### Who was involved in the project? Individuals and Organisations.



Flavour Fortnight is a spin off project from Savour the Flavours. While still managed by the Project Manager of Savour the Flavours the majority of the work involved relates to event development support for businesses, marketing, design, print costs, photography, web development and PR. Most of this work was done by external contractors. The management of the project was overseen by



Dave Smith, Chairman of Savour the Flavours and the rest of the Committee of the D&G Food & Drink Initiative.

The project also works very closely with Chris Brown, Principal Economic Regeneration Officer with D&G Council in developing future plans.

## What were the aims and objectives of the project?



Project aims:

- To deliver a major region-wide food festival
- To raise the profile of Dumfries & Galloway within the Scottish Food & Drink Fortnight programme
- To gain industry buy in and increase the number of events hosted by the industry
- To engage with consumers – visitors and local people – increasing consumer participation

Marketing aims:

- To establish a recognisable brand identity for Flavour Fortnight, consistent across all marketing communications material
- To position Flavour Fortnight as one of Dumfries & Galloway's major events
- To undertake marketing activity to encourage participation of local people, day trippers and visitors in the event
- To undertake audience / participant research to identify opportunities for event development.

The ultimate aim is to help position Dumfries & Galloway as a quality food destination.

## How was the funding package assembled?



Project Match Funders	
Dumfries & Galloway Council	£15,000
In-Kind Contribution from Members	£ 4,020
LEADER Grant Approved	<u>£19,020</u>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b><u>£38,040</u></b>

## How much money did LEADER provide?

£19,020

## The Project Experience

## **When did the project take place?**

Flavour Fortnight is a 16 day food festival spanning Dumfries & Galloway from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011, paralleling Scottish Food & Drink Fortnight.

## **What actually happened?**



Flavour Fortnight 2011, which ran concurrently with Scottish Food and Drink Fortnight (3<sup>rd</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September), was made up of 92 local events. All the Flavour Fortnight events were hosted by members of Savour the Flavours with each event focusing on the promotion of quality local food and drink. By harnessing the passion, knowledge and enthusiasm of the industry an event has been created which connects consumers with local food and drink businesses. This year there were almost as many events happening in Dumfries & Galloway as in the rest of Scotland combined. Flavour Fortnight is now one of the biggest food events to be held in Scotland.

## **How was the project delivered?**



Using existing Savour the Flavours communication networks Flavour Fortnight supported businesses in developing and planning individual and collaborative Flavour Fortnight events, with an emphasis on innovative and creative approaches. The programme of events spanned the entire food and drink experience, from farming and food production to fine dining, and it included a diverse range of events.



An engaging website was developed, an extensive marketing campaign was delivered and Flavour Fortnight launched its very own Apple App.



There was a fantastic range of unique and unusual experiences on offer including a wild food forage around an art gallery, a jazz themed celebration of jam, a Greek mezze made with local food, an opportunity to enjoy the first tilapia harvest from Scotland's first aquaponics project, a gastronomic quiz event, a menu showcasing Robert Burns' favourite meals, an opportunity to meet majestic Highland cattle and full day butchery

demonstrations.



There were lots of free family events giving the opportunity to see things you wouldn't normally see, for example, how honey's made, how salmon is smoked, farm tours; Farmers' Markets put on special demos and hotels and restaurants across the region were offering menus highlighting local produce; retail outlets offered special events including samplings of chocolate, ice cream, cheese and fish; many producers opened their doors - sometimes for the first time.

## What marketing was undertaken?



Marketing undertaken focused around supporting events and activities, these included:

- Developing and launching the new Flavour Fortnight brand
  - Developing and launching an interactive website
  - Developing and launching an Apple App
- Producing a high quality programme of events
  - Developing supporting marketing materials for event organisers
  - Developing generic Flavour Fortnight signage and banners
  - Undertaking photography and filming of members and events to visually represent the region's food and drink industry, and supplying content to third parties, such as VisitScotland and Scotland Food and Drink to increase representation of Dumfries & Galloway within national publications.
  - Media spend included ITV TV and online, West Sound Radio, multiple local newspapers, Scotland on Sunday, The Pulse magazine, Great British Food magazine, Travel GBI.
  - PR activity generated coverage on Landward, Great British Food Magazine, Foodie Magazine, Dumfries & Galloway Life Magazine, Scottish Farmer and local newspapers.



The evaluation confirmed that the marketing and promotion of Flavour Fortnight appears to have been a major demand generator. The high quality brochure, and its wide circulation, was noted as a key promotional tool as well as being a quality keepsake for future reference.

Co-ordinated and high quality advertising across a variety of media outlets ensured that events benefited from increased footfall and sales.

## **Who benefited from the project?**



Flavour Fortnight allows people to enjoy behind the scenes glimpses into our region's food and drink industry, indulging in delicious meals and listening to the stories behind the artisan products made in Dumfries and Galloway. The format of Flavour Fortnight, with events hosted by businesses themselves, ensured there was no geographic barrier to participation and an encouragement of collaborative events provided opportunities to take part for even the newest and the smallest of businesses.

Flavour Fortnight gives businesses the opportunity to be innovative and try new ideas, it's an opportunity to challenge themselves and to push the boundaries of their businesses.

An independent evaluation of Flavour Fortnight 2011 revealed that almost three quarters of the firms which participated in a Flavour Fortnight event realised an increase in their trading position, in some cases this was as much as £2,600 per event - with a median value of £180 per business. This is a significant value considering many of the events were 'one off' and day events, validating the view that food and drink events deliver financial benefits to participating companies. Overall, the estimated direct financial impact across all participating businesses is estimated to be in the region of £30,289.

A significant proportion of businesses noted that participating in Flavour Fortnight had identified future trading opportunities. The future trading benefits ranged from £500 per annum to £50,000 per annum, the average financial impact of future trading opportunities was £4,850, with a median value of £1,000 per business. Overall, the estimated direct financial impact of future trading opportunities across all participating businesses is estimated to be in the region of £147,000. One firm confirmed that the hosting of an event had secured a contract worth £50,000.

It should also be noted that the focus of most events was not an economic one, rather the primary focus was on showcasing products and processes, education and awareness raising across the Dumfries & Galloway food and drink sector.



The overwhelming feedback from responding businesses was that the entire Flavour Fortnight programme had a positive impact on their business.



Businesses were asked to outline how participating in specific events and the overall Flavour Fortnight programme supported the development of their business, product and/or service. A selection of comments provided by survey participants are provided below:

*The event has publicised our business and let a much wider range of customers see exactly what we do. Many customers who came to our event were amazed at what we do and had no idea that we even existed. We have had a few online orders already from people outside Dumfries and Galloway.*

*It has created more awareness and exposed people to our restaurant that may not have visited us ordinarily. It has also helped highlight the ethos behind our business of using the fantastic local produce available in our area.*

*PR exposure and opportunity to explain directly to interested foodies and those interested in animal welfare how we farm so that we build long term loyalty.*

*Some customers visited the shop as a result of seeing the event in the programme and they did not know we were there before. Some have already returned as customers.*

*It helped us to experiment with products and events which we would not otherwise have done.*

*Encouraged plans for development of new ranges*

*Helped identify USP. Broadened width of customer base.*

*Flavour Fortnight 2010 and 2011 have increased our profile locally and nationally with new and existing customers. We have created links, contacts and support with other businesses. Flavour Fortnight is an opportunity for all D&G food businesses to increase profile and turnover.*



The independent evaluation highlighted that there was a direct financial impact to businesses as a result of (1) trading during the festival and (2) future trading opportunities. In total this is estimated to be around £177,289. There were also additional indirect benefits associated with specific overnight trips to events, the value of which is estimated to be around £16,400.

In total Flavour Fortnight has helped generate in the region of £193,689, which when measured against the value of the public sector support (£34,000) represents a return of investment of £1:£5.7.

## How did the final budget turn out?

From the original project approval of £19,020, the project claimed £19,014.31.

## What lessons have been learnt?



The focus of 2011 was on proving the value of Flavour Fortnight by increasing engagement with the industry and with local audiences, and in evidencing the economic importance and the tourism potential of the event.

The evaluation clearly indicates that Flavour Fortnight has generated a range of valuable impacts across a variety of businesses and geographies. It is also apparent that businesses have tested new ideas, products and markets as a result of Flavour Fortnight. The ability and confidence to test new markets has resulted in successful feedback for a number of new ventures, the impact of which are likely to accrue beyond the time of Flavour Fortnight itself.

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It is worth noting that many firms would like to see Flavour Fortnight continue to grow and develop. Linked to views on the strategic marketing and promotional activities provided by Savour the Flavours, businesses recognise the importance of high quality and high volume advertising. Businesses also noted the role the event can play in supporting the development of Dumfries and Galloway as a food destination, and the opportunity to attract even more tourists in future years.

There are a number of event specific concerns, notably about advertising, signage and encouraging new producers to events. There may also be scope in supporting new, and existing, event organisers better understand what makes a successful event.

Businesses were asked to provide feedback on how they think Flavour Fortnight could be improved in the future. Many respondents believed the event was working effectively and minimal change was necessary, some key suggestions are listed below:



*Continuing to support businesses. Perhaps allowing us to know what each other is doing so that we can complement other businesses or make links rather than keeping everything so secretive that nobody knows when other events are on and then clashes are made which could have been avoided.*

*Keep growing. Aim at outside people to come into the region. It will become a food destination*

*festival which can only help Dumfries and Galloway business.*

*More funding for publicity and support would take it to the next level.*

*Just keep growing and attracting people from outside the region. Making it a food destination.*

*Signage was poor ... needs to be waterproof! Also, producers need more encouragement to participate ... probably come from producer to producer communication, I certainly will be encouraging colleagues to participate next year, they are missing out! There might have been 92 food events, but when you take out multiple events held by the same producer, there are not enough of us supporting Flavour Fortnight. I think an individual producer should have 1 listing in the brochure / website, with their multiple events sub-listed ... otherwise it comes down*

*to the handful of bigger producers dominating the Flavours Fortnight for themselves. Also suggest that the event does not have to follow Scotland Food & Drink Fortnight ... might get more press, but D&G may be big enough to go it alone ... main reason for this suggestion is that we would probably have had 3 or 4 times the number of visitors if it had been in August with school holidays / tourists + better weather.*



## **Will the project be mainstreamed or transferred?**



Dumfries and Galloway Council recognise Flavour Fortnight to be a key event within the region. The event complements the Regional Tourism Strategy 2011-16.

The event sits within Dumfries & Galloway Council's Priority 4 "We will support and stimulate our local economy", encouraging food and drink related businesses to develop and proactively engage with local communities and visitors to the region, making the link between local food and local communities stronger and stimulating growth in the sector as a result. It fits with Priority 5 of the South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy "Realise the full potential of the indigenous business sectors and maximise the rural contribution to Scotland's priority industries and in particular food, tourism, textiles and renewable industries" by celebrating and highlighting excellence in Dumfries & Galloway's food and drink sector at a local and national level.

Dumfries & Galloway Council recognises that Flavour Fortnight positions local food and drink at the heart of the tourism experience in Dumfries & Galloway and begins to position the region as a food destination with this flagship food event and they will continue to

support the future development of Flavour Fortnight. Discussions related to the long term funding and support of the event are ongoing.

### **Detail the sustainability of the project and/or the exit strategy.**



Responsibility for the event will move from the regional food organisation, Savour the Flavours, to the food and drink industry itself. Within the next 3 years the value of the event to the food industry will become increasingly apparent, with increased sales throughout the fortnight and long term customers secured through positive engagement with consumers. There is

therefore scope for making participation chargeable and future income streams are something that an industry led committee are beginning to explore.

Possible sponsorship is being actively investigated and would suit a company who have an interest in supporting tourism and food and drink project development in Dumfries & Galloway.

### **Detail how the project has addressed the LEADER issue selected in the application.**

The project tackled LEADER issue – ‘Develop a diverse and dynamic business base’

The success of this issue within the project has been clearly demonstrated in the evaluation document.