


<b>FINAL EVALUATION REPORT</b>		
<b>Project Name: WELLINGTON INITIATIVE</b>		
<b>Project Number: S31</b>		
<b>Start Date:</b> October 1 <sup>st</sup> 2007	<b>Finish Date:</b> March 31 <sup>st</sup> 2008	

### Introduction and Scope

1. This Final Evaluation Report requires **Taunton Deane Borough Council** to provide a report on the success or otherwise of the **Wellington Initiative Project** in achieving its stated aims and objectives. It moves beyond the scope of the Quarterly Progress Reports already completed for each claim, by reviewing the wider impact of the project. Please refer to the guidance notes

### Project Aims and Objectives

2. Please provide a brief narrative summary of the project's success or otherwise in achieving its broad aims and objectives as given in your original application and your M&E plans as appropriate. Describe how you achieved them, and if you didn't achieve some of them please explain why.

The aim and objectives as set out in the M&E plan will hopefully be fully achieved in the next five years and the Rural Renaissance funding has helped to stimulate this process and make the project an initial success. The current partnership of Taunton Deane Borough Council, Wellington Town Council, Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Wellington Farmers' Market and Wellington Economic Partnership aim for the whole community to benefit. The long-term aim is to attract more visitors and shoppers to the town and so help to stimulate all the businesses in the town and the surrounding local area by establishing a larger customer base. This will create a higher level of trade and therefore more opportunity for the expansion of economic activity within the community. It is hoped that this, in turn, will lead to more jobs for local people (especially young people), which are sustainable for the future and hopefully will encourage the opening of new businesses.

It is hoped that within a five year period that Wellington will be established as a "Food Town" which will be a regional centre of excellence that encourages many more people to visit the town in search of producer's quality products. With the increasing success of Food Town, it is hoped to attract many more customers from throughout the region to come to Wellington to shop in the retail sector generally.

Rural Renaissance funding has enabled many aspects of the Food Town Initiative to come to fruition. Approximately 50% of the total funding was used to pay a part time (0.4) coordinator for the Wellington Food Town Initiative for a 12-month period from Sept 2007 to Sept 2008. The job description of the coordinator is attached.

Wellington Farmers Market are a key partner in the Food Town Initiative and the Rural Renaissance funding has allowed this group to raise their profile and provided them with an identity through the purchase of matching gazebos. Trailers and other equipment allow these gazebos to be moved to other locations so that the Farmers Market can be established in out

of town venues eg Runnington Strawberry Fair and Norton Fitzwarren Steam Fair for one off events and regular markets at Cotford St Luke. These regular markets at Wellington and Cotford St Luke have established a firm local client base, which regularly supports the traders.

Many small producers are benefiting from the business opportunities that are provided by the regular markets and other events. The Farmers Market provides a retail outlet for small producers who do not require a permanent outlet at the current time.

Several members of the Farmers Market have attended a skills development training day in Effective Merchandising, so improving their marketing skills at events.

The main focus of the Food Town Initiative this year was the highly successful two day Food Festival held on the weekend of the 5<sup>TH</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> July 2008. As part of this annual Food Festival many of the local schools participated in a healthy eating initiative, which involved visits to local schools by celebrity chefs and dieticians to involve the children in designing their own menu and being shown how to use fresh natural foods to create the dishes of their choice.

The local community have been encouraged to begin to think of Wellington as a Food Town through the regular Farmers Markets and the annual Food Festival. They are kept regularly informed by newspaper articles and other marketing initiatives.

### Project Outputs

3. The agreed Outputs for the **Wellington Initiative Project** are set out below. Please report on the progress the project has made in achieving these Outputs, including, if relevant, detail of how the project overcame unforeseen difficulties in relation to delivering on the Output targets. Where possible outline the tools you used to measure them

4. Outputs Summary Table.

Output Type	Original Target total	Revised Target total	Total achieved to date (31 July 08)	Future years (08-09)
1 Jobs created	1	0.5	0	0.5
3 Business creation	3	3	0	0
4 Business Support	70	17	93	0
4a Businesses Assisted	17	60	18	0
6 Skills Development	20	26	18	0

5. Report on Outputs Progress:

The Wellington Food Town Co-ordinator was initially appointed on a part time basis for one year (0.4). This will come to an end at the end of Sept 08. During the course of the year the Co-ordinator has acted as a vital links-person connecting Wellington Town Council, Wellington Economic Partnership, Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Wellington Farmers Market and Community Representatives with the activities of the Wellington Food Town Steering Group.

This work has primarily involved promotion of Food Town activity & ethos, co-ordinating Food Town branded events and attending other local events to raise the profile of the Food Town. In addition the Co-ordinator has liaised with food related businesses attending Food Town events, monitored the Food Town website, acted as the administrator at Food Town meetings and recruited volunteers to help with events etc

It is hoped that enough impetus has been established that a permanent 0.5 post is created in the near future if funding permits (Target 1)

The application process to Rural Renaissance meant that the Sept 2007 two-day event had taken place before acknowledgement of the success of the funding bid and a decision was also taken to cancel the December 2007 event. The original outputs were based around the holding of these events so revised outputs were requested in Dec 2007. However now the 2008 Food Festival has been held it means virtually all of the outputs in section 6 have been successfully met If the original figures are used and outputs 4 and 4a have been exceeded.

A total of 18 businesses were “assisted” in November 2007 and March 2008 through a programme concentrating on Wellington Regeneration Initiatives and 18 businesses received Skills Development in February 2008 through a full-day training workshop on “Effective Merchandising” where help was given on how to display, merchandise and market their products more effectively.

The Wellington Food Festival was held on the weekend of the 5/6<sup>th</sup> of July 2008 in the grounds of Wellington School. This event attracted a total of 72 stallholders in addition to the 21 Wellington Farmers Market stallholders.

All of these businesses received a large measure of business support through a three-month professional marketing campaign carried out by the Olden Group.

This involved publicity material and the creation of a website which provided details of all of the stallholder’s names, addresses, products and links to their websites. The link to the Food Town website is [www.wellingtonfoodtown.co.uk](http://www.wellingtonfoodtown.co.uk)

70% of the traders found the professional organisation to be either “Excellent” or “Good” and 74% found that the Food Festival had created a positive impact on their business in the “average” through to “excellent” categories.

## Project Outcomes

6. The agreed Outcomes for the **Wellington Initiative Project** are set out below. Please report on the progress the project has made in achieving these Outcomes, including, if relevant, detail of how the project overcame unforeseen difficulties in relation to delivering these Outcomes:

7. Outcomes.

Outcomes Summary Table:	
Outcome	Progress on Achievement

<p><b>Growth in local food outlets</b></p>	<p>The current economic climate means that the funding is unavailable for many potential businesses to open new food retail outlets. There are also concerns that retail spending is tightening and would limit the success of new outlets.</p> <p>There has however been an increase in the number of stallholders at the Wellington Farmers Markets as a result of the improved marketing and branding made possible by the Rural Renaissance funding. This has led to the current situation where there are another 6 stallholders waiting to join the group when space becomes available</p>
<p><b>A healthier local retail economy connected to local retail markets</b></p>	<p>There has been a strong media awareness campaign in the local press and local schools to encourage the use of whole foods and locally produced food. Wellington Farmers Market traders have built on this to improve their own businesses by promoting the use of locally grown or organic food and sales have increased accordingly. Regular visitors to the Farmers Market also use other retail outlets.</p> <p>The Food Festival this year attracted an estimated 12,000 visitors over the course of the weekend. In a survey carried out at the event (sample of 200) a third said they have rarely or never used Wellington for shopping. It is hoped many of these will be enthused by what the retailers in the town had to offer and will provide a boost to the local retail economy</p> <p>In the survey 45% of the sample had spent over £30 in the town that day.</p>

<p><b>More tourists and regular visitors</b></p>	<p>The long-term aim is to establish Wellington Food Town as a regional centre of excellence that encourages many more people from throughout the region to come to Wellington to shop in search of the local producer's quality products.</p> <p>Visitors came from a very wide area to attend the Food Festival and it is hoped their positive experience will lead to many of them returning on a regular basis. 78% of the visitors to the Food Town were from Somerset with 11% from Devon and 11% from further afield.</p> <p>The Farmers Markets have a very committed group of customers and this partly explains why the group could easily expand if a suitable location could be found</p>
<p><b>Higher profile for local products</b></p>	<p>The organisers of Wellington Farmers Market are "happy and delighted" with the benefits they have seen from the equipment which was funded by Rural Renaissance</p> <p>This equipment is used at least every 2 weeks at either Wellington or Cotford St Luke and is also used at various one off events. This year, these have included the Strawberry Fair at Runnington, Wellington Food Festival and the Steam Rally at Norton Fitzwarren.</p> <p>The organiser also feels the whole of the market has been "upgraded" by the new equipment particularly the gazebos which provide a professionalism and uniformity to the stalls.</p> <p>The market has a better identity and has a more "up-market" feel and as a consequence there is now a waiting list of 5 or 6 stallholders.</p> <p>The Power-flags have been particularly effective at advertising and promoting the market and there is generally a very positive feedback from customers.</p>

In the original application 5 draft outputs were proposed

1. 5 new businesses involved in direct marketing. This has been achieved due to the successful increase in the number of members of the Wellington Farmers Market.
2. New generator, canopies, trailer for Wellington Farmers market. Target fully met.

3. Training sessions specifically designed to meet the needs of Wellington Farmers Market producers. Target fully met
4. Increase in sales for producers involved in training. From the evidence of the stallholders in general at this years two day event 28% found that they achieved excellent or good sales (above average expectations)
5. Increase in community ventures supported through the role of the project co-ordinator. The project coordinator has been heavily involved in developing the vision for Wellington, establishing a 20-year plan for the town (see website [www.visionforwellington.org.uk/](http://www.visionforwellington.org.uk/) for details).

### **Wider Impact**

8. Please comment on the wider impact of the project across the region/area. Please also report on any evidence that you may not already have used.
9. Commentary on the Project's Wider Impact:

The Wellington Food Festival draws traders from a much larger area than the immediate hinterland of Wellington. All of the traders are from the southwest region with the majority coming from a radius of 30 Miles.

This wider participation has spread the message that Wellington should be recognised as a Food Town and the traders are aware that the organisation (which has been partly funded by Rural Renaissance) has been of a very high standard and that the success of this year's event hopefully means it will be sustainable for the future.

Despite the weather 65% of the traders rated the event as "Excellent" or "Good" and 85% were hoping to support next years event, with 77% hopefully supporting a Christmas event this year

Having a trader base from outside the immediate area has allowed local businesses to network, develop new suppliers, establish a wider customer base and learn examples of best practice.

### **Ongoing Sustainability**

10. Where relevant, please report on the ongoing sustainability of the facility/service delivered by this project. Where project completion also represents the termination of a service delivered by the project funding, this section is not applicable.
11. Review of Ongoing Sustainability.

It is the hope of the Food Town Steering Group & Wellington Economic Partnership that in the future sufficient funding will be raised to finance the work of a part time Food Town Co-ordinator, perhaps as part of a role as general Wellington Projects Co-ordinator working on behalf of the Economic Partnership.

The work of the co-ordinator has connected community representatives and business representatives in a way that did not take place before. In the immediate future volunteers will help to keep this momentum going with the original 12 month post being a crucial kick-start

The equipment purchased on behalf of Wellington Farmers Markets provides the long-term base for the future and should last for many years. Any future investment may require replacement of the gazebos, as it is important that the quality of the presentation of the Farmers Market display is not allowed to deteriorate as this could detract from the image they have currently achieved. In the long term a larger regular base for the Farmers Markets is needed if the group is to meet the demand of potential new stallholders

## **Publicity**

12. Please report on any key publicity undertaken. You should make specific reference to any SWRDA/Somerset Rural Renaissance inclusion in any publicity. Please include copies of any publicity materials or indicate if already provided.

13. Report on Publicity Undertaken.

There has been a huge amount of publicity material advertising the Food Festival and newspaper articles covering the success of the event. Wellington Farmers Markets advertise weekly and provide updates to the press of extra events that they organise. Please see the attached press releases.

## **The Project Experience**

14. Please report on the project experience overall. Please indicate what you would do differently in future and in addition include anything else you think will help to show how you spent Rural Renaissance funding eg letters of support from beneficiaries, businesses or users, other reports etc. You should consider including lessons learned that could be disseminated to other Organisations delivering related projects or those using a similar delivery model. Please also include suggestions as to how relationships between your organisation and the beneficiaries of the project and also your organisation and Somerset Rural Renaissance could be improved/ revised. This will help inform our thinking on future funding programmes.

15. Review of Project Experience.

The project has produced a series of measurable outcomes such as the number of businesses assisted and supported. In addition the role of the part time coordinator has contributed hugely to the success of the 2008 Food Festival, which is one of the key events in the raising public awareness for Wellington to be recognised as a "Food Town".

Data collected through visitor and stallholder surveys at the Food Festival show that visitors are coming from a wide area and that the stallholders are improving their sales and marketing to a bigger potential client group. Many visitors to the Food Festival are now aware of where they can source local food, so saving on food miles. This will obviously benefit local retailers in terms of increased sales.

This was a short-term project and there was a time delay before capital items of equipment became available for use. Eg the gazebos did not arrive until January 2008 only two months before the end of the project.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information contained in this claim and supporting document/s is true and accurate.

Signed	Trevor Wall	Date	07/10/08
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