

European Declaration Consultation - UK Report



Attendees:

Ben Raskin - Soil Association/ CSA Network UK
Robert Simpson - Farnham Local Food/ CSA Network UK
Gareth Davies - Canalside Community Agriculture/ CSA Network UK
Charlotte Barry - Camel CSA/ CSA Network UK
Mark Norman - Camel CSA
Alex Wilson - Steepholding
Maresa Bossano - CSA Network UK
Charlotte Steel - Sutton Community Farm
Christine Andrew - Well End Micro Farm CSA
Robert McClaughlin - Willow Farm
Matt Durbin - Willow Farm
Tracy Wathen-Jones - Cultivate Oxford / CSA Network UK
Matt Cracknell - Feed Bristol
Martin Campodonic - Sims Hill CSA

Apologies

Tom O'Kane - Cae Tan CSA
Mick Marston - Gibside CSA
Amy Willoughby - Plotgate CSA
John Bristow - Brighton Sheepshare
Fergus Quinn - Well End Micro Farm CSA
Sara Rock - Harrowbarrow & Metherell Agricultural Society

Meeting report:

The meeting was organised by the CSA Network UK. It was held at the Soil Association offices in Bristol where we met for lunch and then drove to the Feed Bristol site to hold consultation and also to do a site visit to Sims Hill Shared Harvest CSA at the same time.

We decided to hold the meeting on 12 October 2015 as we already had a CSA Network board meeting that day so were able to combine the two meetings. The meeting was publicised via our Facebook page and Twitter which have over 2000 followers and our Google group for CSAs. Due to the location most of those attending came from the South West, South East or Wales as it was too far for others to travel. Unfortunately we had a few people who could not make it on the day but all the information was circulated to them for their comments too.



Results of consultation:

We split into four groups to discuss each section of the European CSA Declaration and then came together at the end to exchange comments.

All the groups were happy with the Preamble section:

All over Europe, people are coming together to regain control of their food, from production to distribution to consumption. We are building systems centered on our local communities. We are joining forces to achieve food sovereignty, by reclaiming our right to define our own food and agricultural systems.

The time is ripe to address the disastrous effects of the industrial food system. Food is too important to merely treat it as a commodity.

The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement can bring about a wide range of benefits for all. We are many, varied and united. We are stepping up in solidarity – taking responsibility – to create socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sustainable food systems. Already in Europe hundreds of thousands of people have proven that CSA works, by creating a variety of practices, initiatives and networks based on common values.

Building upon the existing charters and experiences, this declaration aims to lay down the common ground for this CSA movement to flourish.

In the Definition there were a couple of areas that UK CSAs did not agree with:

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership based on the human relationship between a group of consumers and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreement.

1. They would prefer for the definition to say 'people' rather than 'consumers'
2. They did not think it should specify a long-term binding agreement as many CSAs in the UK do not have this.



In the CSA Guiding Principles:

CSA is not a static model. Like a garden it is dynamic: it evolves and grows through daily care. However, we agree on some basic principles as our common ground to grow the CSA movement.

- *Responsible care for the land and other commons through Agroecology*
- *Food as a common good rather than a commodity*
- *Human scale farming and production adapted to local realities with fair working conditions*
- *Respect for the environment and animal welfare*
- *Fresh, local, seasonal, healthy and diverse food accessible to all*
- *Community building through direct and long term relationships with shared responsibility, risks and rewards*
- *Active participation based on trust, understanding, respect, transparency and cooperation*
- *Mutual support and solidarity.*

The following changes were suggested:

1. The Introduction should say: *There are many varied CSA models but we agree on some*

basic principles as our common ground to grow the CSA movement.

2. The first point should be changed to: *Responsible care for the environment through Agroecology.*
3. Change: *Human-scale farming to Appropriate-scale farming*
4. Delete: *Respect for the environment*

In the final section:

We want to build a strong coalition of CSAs and CSA networks across Europe to:

- Show the benefits of CSA for the whole of society*
- Strengthen the CSA movement and help new CSAs to flourish*
- Act as a voice for CSA communities to bring about change in European policy and agriculture to benefit above mentioned principles*
- Work together with other social and solidarity economy movements*
- Enable sharing of knowledge and skills between CSAs in different countries*
- Link up organisations and individuals that are working to support CSA*
- Empower and educate people to act and develop the movement.*

We are a grassroots movement: we believe that the power of CSA is in pragmatic, everyday action and face-to-face relationships. We are connecting with each other, with the farmers in our communities and with the living soil beneath our feet: this is our Common Ground.

- It was proposed that the last paragraph should be moved to the start of the section not the end.
- Also the fourth point should be changed to *Work together with other solidarity and social economy movements.*

Overall all the representatives of the CSAs were very happy with the declaration. They also said they found the day very enjoyable and useful meeting other CSAs and sharing information and getting to see the Sims Hill site.