



ECO CHURCH
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Guide to Food Co-operatives

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Former Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams caused a ripple when he told us all to get out into the wet now and again. If Eco Church is to mean anything, it should start with our everyday existence. Here are some practical tips for transforming your personal lifestyle.

think



Increasing numbers of church and community groups are setting up food co-ops. Through these home-grown initiatives, people can get good food at an affordable price and have more control over the source.

'A food co-op is where people get together to buy food in bulk – often from an ethical wholesaler,' said A Rocha UK's Churches And Theology Director Dr Ruth Valerio. She set up a food co-op with a small group from church.

'We buy from Infinity Foods,' said Ruth. 'Every six months or so, we put together a big order of all the different things we want. A lorry pulls up outside my house and I help carry everything in.'

'That evening, everyone from the group comes round to collect the different items they've ordered. It means we can get ethical food, but at a price that's cheaper than the supermarket.'

Ruth and her friends reduce on their use of packaging. Typical orders will include a range of products from big bags of rice and pasta, to cleaning materials in large containers. 'Most of the products are Fairtrade and organic,' Ruth explained. 'So it's all good stuff. And it's a nice community thing.'

do



Explore the idea of food co-ops

Download the simple, straightforward advice and guidelines from FoodCoops.org. The project has ended, but the tools they created remain online.

do more



Find out about the co-operative movement

Visit the website and discover more about these key components of shared ownership and democratic decision-making. There are many such businesses around the world, of which The Co-operative Group is one of the largest. They are concerned about a range of issues including – environment, animal rights, fair trade and genetically modified food.

Examine the Food Co-op Initiative

This US-based group aims to increase the number, success and sustainability of new food co-operatives delivering access to healthy food in diverse communities. It provides information, training and technical assistance – as well as seed capital, and engages in research, to maintain and improve the development path for new food co-ops.

Have a look at ethical and organic wholesalers

These companies supply food co-ops. They include Suma and Infinity Foods – who are both leading UK wholesale distributors of organic and natural foods.



FOOD CO-OPERATIVES TOOLKIT

www.sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit

CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

www.co-operative.coop/corporate/widermovement

FOOD CO-OPERATIVE INITIATIVE

www.foodcoopinitiative.coop

SUMA

www.suma.coop

INFINITY FOODS

www.infinityfoodswholesale.co.uk

www.ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk



Be informed about community food co-ops in Wales

They operate from a wide variety of places such as – schools, community centres, church halls and workplaces. As well as helping you eat more healthily, you can also save money by using your local food co-op. On average a regular customer saves around £220 a year. As well as selling fruit and vegetables, many also offer produce such as eggs, meat, fish or bread. Many are linked to other community activities such as parent and toddler groups, community cafes and social groups.

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FOOD CO-OPS WALES

www.foodcoopswales.org.uk