

# One thing we have learnt this week – food deserts

Posted on **October 12,2018** by **admin**

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[caption id="attachment\_344" align="aligncenter" width="300"]Melons growing on fence. Melons growing on fence.[/caption] We have learnt this week that more than a million people in the UK live in food deserts. These are poorer places where either a lack of transport or supermarkets or other food shops make the purchase of healthy food difficult to impossible. Its a strange but true fact that healthy food is more expensive than unhealthy processed food high in fat or sugar. That's why so many low income individuals are obese and also why obesity is getting more and more common. A variety of solutions have been proposed to this problem which to varying extents exists across the Western World. In the US supermarkets have been subsidised to move into low income neighbourhoods. In France and now the UK very low cost supermarkets have been setup that use food past its best by. In Bristol though there are more holistic solutions. A local church ([The River Church](#)) runs a not for profit cafe so people can get low cost healthier meals. The second idea is an urban farm combined with a shop to buy fresh produce just above the church. The two seem to be separate organisations. You can buy eggs, homemade jams and other preserves from its shop. Meanwhile the ([Hartcliffe Health & Environment Action Group](#)) encourages people to grow food on allotments and sells fresh produce cheaper than the supermarkets. It also offer cooking lessons since people are becoming deskilled at cooking anything (true of both rich and poor). Food is going to expensive in a post oil world. But there is a chance to solve environmental and social/health problems in one go. The lessons of these projects is there is no silver bullets to food deserts and different groups with different groups need to work together. Neil

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