

Veronica Burke  
1955-2018



Veronica cared about other people, especially young ones. She believed that, no matter what the context or occasion, people should be properly fed. As she often observed, eating is ‘always about more than the food’. Attachment, security, conviviality, justice – these were the important social ‘nourishment’ that a well-ordered food system should provide. She made sure that the people round her own ‘table’ were nourished in the fullest sense and she worked to make this a possibility for everyone.

Veronica came to food and farming from a successful career in childcare and family law, during which she started mediation services in the North of England and developed interdisciplinary training in dispute resolution, children's rights, welfare advocacy and domestic violence. Paying attention to the nurture as well as the nourishment that are essential to our wellbeing, Veronica made providing and sharing real food the heart of her work.

She helped to create one of the first community-supported bakeries in the UK – Breadshare Community-Supported Bakery, which began life in 2011 at Whitmuir Farm and then moved to Portobello in Edinburgh. She developed the Baking for Community training at Bread Matters at Macbiehill in the Borders. Programmes such as Sourdough Exchange and Soil to Slice [LINK] demonstrated her creative engagement with young

people and her imaginative take on food sovereignty, embodied in the call to ‘grow your own loaf’.

One of the many young people who encountered Veronica in this way has written:

“She was an inspiring mentor and a dear friend to me for many of my years living in Scotland. I was always so invigorated by her energy and passion for making a better food system, and with such care and the warmest of encouragement she supported me on my own political and agricultural journey.”

Veronica is, of course, irreplaceable. But her ideas and energetic example will animate Scotland The Bread for good.

Here is something she wrote just before she became ill with cancer in 2017:

“Abundant possibilities spring up when we are invited to re-imagine the way we ‘do’ bread:

- a micro-bakery to feed a school, a clinic, a prison, a care home
- a community to share its breadmaking skills and varied cultural traditions, creating more real meaningful jobs;
- a local authority or NHS Trust giving nourishing bread a central place in its food provision...

...and questions such as

‘What if WE had the best food that we could possibly grow and make - in OUR community?’

These sudden outbursts of common sense, of food democracy in action, are scaling up. They are entirely viable for the changing realities we face.

They can’t be crushed or co-opted.

They’re probably already unstoppable.”

Andrew Whitley

If you would like to honour her memory by becoming a member or donating to Bread for Good Community Benefit Society, you may do so [here](#).