



SCOTLAND
THE **BREAD**
Home-grown bread for a healthy future

Bread For Good Community Benefit Society Annual Report 1 January - 31 December 2020



Bread For Good Community Benefit Society, trading as Scotland The Bread

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scotlandthebread.org

A registered charity (SC048892)

A community benefit society (FCA registration # RS007315)

Introduction

Andrew Whitley, chair and co-founder of Bread for Good Community Benefit Society

I'm writing this at the end of May 2021 – five months after the end of the year that is the subject of this report. Time is playing tricks with us all as we emerge from the pandemic (if that is what is happening), and the act of looking back and forward at the same time – a rather stilted convention in Annual Reports – actually seems both necessary and energising.

Scotland The Bread is, above all, a food justice organisation. We want to right wrongs, starting from the simple proposition that everyone has an equal right to healthy food grown in ways that go with the grain of nature, restore (bio)diversity, and contribute to the wellbeing of present and future generations. It has taken the Covid pandemic to remind even the most contented defenders of the status quo that our food system does none of these things properly, if at all.

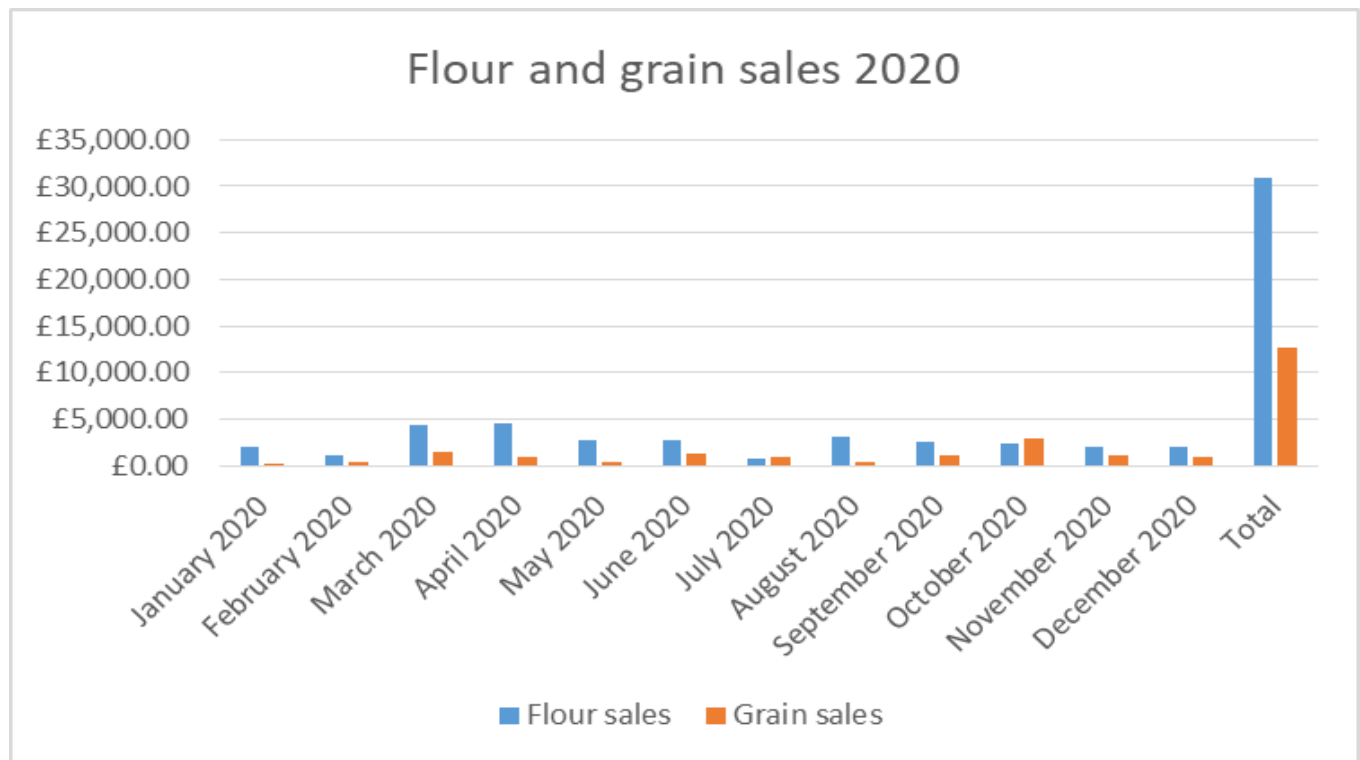
When access to food was disrupted, especially for people living with numerous disadvantages, it was community organisations that often came to the rescue. Our own contribution, with funding help from Innovate UK, was Flour to the People, the project that defined our year and, you might say, confirmed our 2020 vision. We installed a second mill to increase capacity and set about getting our flour to the people and communities where it was most needed. The flour, of course, was nothing but finely ground whole organic grains. There were no hidden additives, or indeed a 'no questions asked' suspiciously low price, however welcome that could have seemed. What did come with every bag was a commitment to help people to turn our flour into tasty, nutritious and digestible bread.

Thanks to our dedicated team in the mill at Bowhouse, sales of flour and grain (and books, starters and baking sundries) reached break-even point last year, but these will never generate enough profit to fund our ambition to change flour and bread in Scotland for good and all. And although raising money is never easy, it does feel as though our Fife Fermenter plan for a 'grain lab', to ferment 'good ideas, better bread and best practice' by researching more diverse and nutritious grains and up-skilling bakers and community cooks, may become a reality sooner rather than later.

When it does, we hope to extend an unrestricted welcome to the many community shareholders and subscribers whose support has helped us thus far. With special thanks to our board of unpaid trustees for their continuing guidance and commitment, I invite you to consider this report of recent activities as you might a starter in a refreshed sourdough, slowly transforming its surroundings, generating some healthy by-products and raising the dough – and perhaps a smile as well.

Treasurer's Report

Kate Anstruther



- Flour and grain sales were up from £35,083 in 2019 to £43,480, driven by demand during the pandemic lockdowns.
- We should be prepared for a possible decrease in 2021 as Covid restrictions lift.
- In 2020 we achieved a surplus of £4,556 compared with a deficit of £4,227 in 2019.
- In 2020 we received £5,050 in share capital compared with £1,551 in 2019.
- The Board has re-established the Funding and Finance Sub Group to develop applications to fund the Fife Fermenter project and other initiatives, and to discuss how to build operating reserves of six months to increase the organisation's resilience.
- Scotland The Bread was the key sub-contractor for Bread Matters Ltd in delivering the [UKRI](#) / Innovate UK-funded project, Flour to the People. This project has delivered a second mill, which was purchased from Bread Matters Ltd once the Innovate UK project completed. The grant of £73k was for a nine month project and consisted of an initial grant and extension funding.
- We also received £10,000 from [The National Lottery Community Fund's Awards for All](#) to appoint a Project Coordinator to grow the Soil to Slice project in 2020 and 2021.

Flour and Grain

Fulltofta Rye Flour: launched early 2020

Fulltofta, our certified organic wholemeal rye flour, is an evolutionary spring rye developed by Hans Larsson in Sweden. Grown at Balcaskie in 2020, like our 2018 crop of winter rye from the same breeder it has an above-average mineral content.

163% more iron

20% more magnesium

42% more phosphorus

The flour excels when used to make real bread (with long fermentation and no additives), as well as moist fruit cakes and North European spice biscuits.

‘Evolutionary’ means that there is a high degree of genetic diversity in the crop (unlike in modern ‘monoclonal’ wheat varieties where every plant in a field is identical to the others). This diversity is a key part of the radical agro-ecological transformation of our food system that is needed to steer our farming and food towards net zero climate heating emissions in line with national commitments to deal with the climate emergency. [Find out more about this flour, its origins and tips for baking with it here.](#)



Flour and grain numbers

In 2020 we started selling grain through Greencity Whole Foods and through our online shop.

2019

Month	Grain sold (kg)	Flour sold (kg)
January 2019		551
February 2019		941
March 2019		984
April 2019		1,359
May 2019		1,924
June 2019	3,000	1,811
July 2019	3,000	1,566
August 2019		1,290
September 2019	7,000	1,521
October 2019		1,607
November 2019		1,453
December 2019	6,100	1,572
TOTALS	19,100	16,579

2020

Month	Grain sold (kg)	Flour sold (kg)
January 2020	366	677
February 2020	1,465	1,137
March 2020	1,522	2,531
April 2020	355	1,974
May 2020	728	2,061
June 2020	1,140	1,054
July 2020	1,265	1,195
August 2020	781	1,375
September 2020	1,155	1,268
October 2020	5,399	1,476
November 2020	1,375	1,511
December 2020	1,135	1,467
TOTALS	16,686	17,724

Campaigns

Flour to the People

Scotland The Bread was the key delivery partner of this project initiated by Bread Matters, which is also run by our chairman Andrew Whitley.

Updates from Flour to the People and Soil to Slice Project Coordinator Lyndsay Cochrane. [Read Lyndsay's final project report on our blog here.](#)

Our 'Flour to the People' project was designed to respond to the increased demand for quality flour seen during Covid-19 lockdowns, combined with efforts to ensure that our nutritious flour, and the skills to make delicious bread with it, reached those most affected by food insecurity in the face of disrupted just-in-time supply chains.

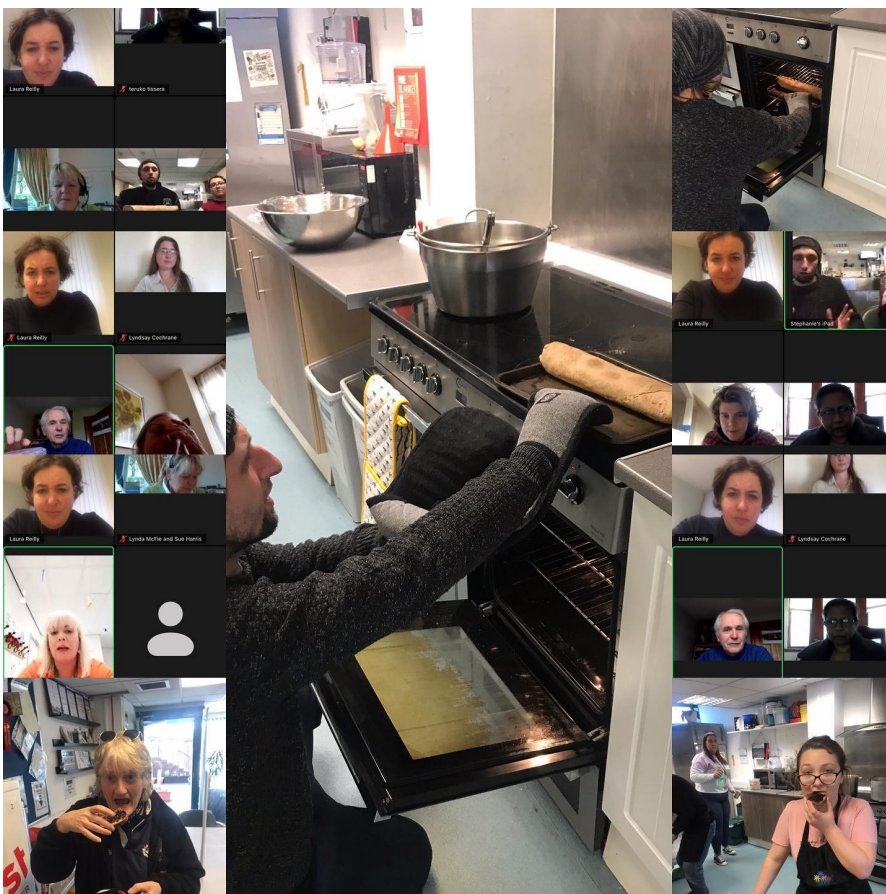


[Summerhill Community Centre](#) prepared home-baking packs for 30 families

The project sought to approach the issue from various angles:

1. We installed a second cyclone mill to increase flour production capacity and enhance efficiency.
2. In partnership with baker Rosie Gray of [Reviving Food](#), we held remote baking events for 10 Community Food Hubs. These events reached over 270 people, teaching real breadmaking skills so that participants have an alternative to purchasing the usual ultra-processed supermarket offerings.

3. A series of remote workshops for a group of small-scale and community bakers offered the chance to discuss how they increase the impact of their localised supply chains. Bakers told us they enjoyed the motivation, ideas and sense of companionship these workshops provided as they work tirelessly to make delicious and nutritious bread available in their communities.
4. These conversations with community groups and bakers, rich in knowledge and experience, form the basis of online resources we have developed to support more communities access and bake with local, nutritious flour.
5. [Six Degrees Edinburgh](#) led research into alternative packaging and distribution systems which could lower both the cost and environmental footprint of our flour to these communities. The team produced interesting suggestions which we are currently considering for feasibility.
6. We were delighted to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from the communities involved in this project and look forward to continuing to support these groups and others as they engage with a local, sustainable flour and bread supply.



*Taking part in an
online Q&A session
with [Belville
Community Garden](#) in
Inverclyde*

Soil to Slice

Our grain is currently making its way to the diverse network of communities across Scotland taking part in our Soil to Slice project, which aims to provide a better understanding of how heritage grains can be grown and enjoyed close to home. We are delighted to welcome several new groups to the project and look forward to supporting them to grow, harvest, thresh, mill and bake with their own locally-grown grains.

Ahead of the growing season, we developed a new handbook to guide growers through the process and have held a couple of online meetings so that we can get to know each other. In our last session, we discussed how participants can measure their crop's development over time, noting how local conditions could affect the final harvest. We are grateful to [Tara Wight](#) - who you may remember undertook an internship about participatory plant breeding last year with Scotland The Bread and [Nourish Scotland](#) - for explaining the what, how and why of data to be collected. Tara will also help us collate the results gathered by this network of citizen scientists, providing valuable insights and an exciting contribution to Scotland The Bread's quest for better grains.



Sacks of grain ready for sowing: photo from S2S participants [Biodynamic Garden Camserney](#) in Aberfeldy

People's Plant Breeding

What is it?

Scotland The Bread has been researching genetically diverse populations, mixtures, evolutionary varieties and landraces of wheat and rye for the past eight years, and for the past three we have pioneered a process called 'People's Plant Breeding'. The idea is to give ordinary citizens a say in choosing the grains that will make our daily bread healthier.

In practice this means taking random sheaves from our trial plots and selecting the 'spikes' (heads) of wheat and rye that look most beautiful and healthy. We thresh these heads and sow the resulting seeds. Next harvest, we can compare the 'people's selections' with the mother crop and see how well our plants have done. When we have the money, we can also get them analysed in the lab to make sure that we are on the right track. In theory, we should be able gradually to improve our cereals without narrowing the all-important diversity that is our long-term guarantee of resilience.

Why?

The first 'Green Revolution' brought increased grain yields via hybridisation and increased use of fossil-fuel-derived fertilisers and chemical biocides. This strategy seems unfit for today's most pressing task – to reduce carbon emissions from agriculture and food to zero, while addressing diet-related illness and evident injustices in global food distribution and access.

Scotland The Bread believes that we might solve such problems if we asked farmers to grow 'less but better'. For us citizens, fewer slices of more 'nutrient-dense' bread would take pressure off our wallets and our waistlines – with obvious benefits for a less intensively exploited natural world. But there's an immediate problem: how do we find and select grains with more nutrients in them which grow well without chemicals?

Modern varieties are 'monoclonal', i.e. every plant in the field is identical, so they are vulnerable to any disease or seasonal shock

that's going. And decades of hybrid breeding have focussed on uniformity and yield stability, not nutrient content. The latest research confirms that the long-term sustainability and productivity (without climate- and nature-damaging chemicals) of our grains depends on diversity.

Our activities this year

Hamstrung by C-19 restrictions, our People's Plant Breeding project continued nonetheless. This year we combined it with an outdoor, socially distanced, six-people-or-fewer threshing event for Soil to Slice groups.

Soil to Slice groups were invited to drop their grain off for threshing and make requests for seeds. The People's Plant Breeding event involved making selections from spikes grown on STB's trial plot near Bowhouse, and was carried out by us and a representative from the James Hutton Institute.

We made a little film about the process. Take a look and see how we're 'going with the grain' of nature in our quest for better bread:

<https://vimeo.com/484122031>

For more information on participatory plant breeding and our unique People's Plant Breeding events, see our write-up of a previous event [here](#) and Tara Wight's post [here](#).

If you'd like to take part in our Soil to Slice project, we have an 'expression of interest' form for new groups on our website - [find it here](#).



Solidarity Bags



Solidarity loaves baked by The Wild Loaf, Everton

Scotland The Bread coordinates the free supply to community bakeries and food programmes of 16 kg 'Solidarity Bags' of nutrient-dense, organic wholemeal wheat flour.

Solidarity Bags of flour are paid for by our customers and delivered by us to community bakeries working to ensure equitable access to nutritious bread and flour.

We devised the Solidarity Bag concept in response to the critical shortage of flour during the first Covid-19 lockdown, but the problem of affordable flour that supports both physical and environmental health is not one that dates back to March 2020. Affordability is an oft-cited barrier to swapping sliced white for slowly fermented sourdough, but we reject the idea that people on low incomes must be resigned to eating industrially produced 'bread' devoid of nutritional value.

These bags are a shared act of solidarity between interlinked communities: our customers 'pay it forward' to support community bakeries, in turn working hard to ensure that their communities continue to have access to nutritious bread and flour at a price that they can afford.

To be a part of this solidarity network, you can either purchase a whole 16kg bag or a half bag [from our online shop](#). Scotland The Bread will then organise and pay for delivery of the flour, which is

then distributed among community members by the bakeries either as flour or bread.

If you are part of a community bakery, organisation or project that could benefit from a free delivery of flour, [please get in touch](#).

Solidarity stories are starting to come in that illustrate what this looks like in practice: [find some of them on our blog here](#).

Miller's Update

From Miller-Manager Connie Hunter

The milling team (me, Clément Boucherit and Liz Donald—below), worked tirelessly through April and May to catch up with the torrent of orders that hit us as lockdown happened. Sales in March, April and May were four times as great as in 2019, and we were forced to close our online shop for a fortnight. Flour orders then settled down a bit, but difficulty continued with re-supplies of some bakery items, notably organic yeast and proving baskets whose German suppliers quoted lead times of many months. We were very grateful for the patience of all our customers, many of whom had found Scotland The Bread for the first time.



Our second Zentrofan cyclone mill

One of the upsides to this surge of demand for flour was the installation of our second mill, which is mostly used for rye flour (available on our website and through Greencity and Highland Wholefoods).



Clément Boucherit and Connie Hunter

We were apprehensive about the impact of another lockdown on our online sales, but thankfully didn't see the a repeat of the panic buying and flour shortages.

Two of our 2020 crops have been cleaned and milled, the winter Balcaskie Landrace and the Fulltofta Rye. We are waiting patiently for our grain cleaning system to be set up in Stenton farm on the Balcaskie Estate, which will allow us to clean smaller quantities at once and to a higher standard.

We'd like to say a warm welcome to new or returning customers who are using or stocking our flour: [find the full list of bakeries and stockists here](#).

If you know a shop that you think should be stocking our flour, or a bakery that could be baking with our flour, please mention to them that they can buy through Greencity and Highland Wholefoods, or send us their details so we can contact them directly. It always helps if they know their existing customers are keen!

Team Update

Welcome Liz Donald to our milling team, working alongside Connie and Clément.

Lyndsay Cochrane came on board as Soil to Slice Project Coordinator to work on our partnership projects with Bread Matters, and also coordinated Flour to the People.

Col Gordon joined the Board of Directors in January 2020. Col has been investigating non-commodity grains since 2012. A few years ago, he began an ambitious research project to identify overlooked varieties of grain that may have useful traits for low-input agronomic systems and have desirable baking qualities. [Read Col's full bio here.](#)



New Members

We were pleased to welcome 54 new shareholders / society members to the Bread For Good Community Benefit Society in 2020, bringing the total at 31 December 2020 to 294 (now 300+).

Anyone can [become a member](#) at any time by buying shares for the option to be actively involved with Bread For Good, and existing members are able to purchase additional shares to support our work,

Get Involved

[Is it Time to Renew Your Subscription?](#)

Shareholder-members of the Bread For Good Community Benefit Society (which trades as Scotland The Bread) automatically receive one year's free subscription, normally £30, with their share purchase. Subscriptions entitle supporters to a 15% discount on flour and grain from our online shop or at occasional markets, as well as exclusive newsletters, invitations and access to events. If yours has expired, **renew on our website** [here](#) to continue receiving both your supporter benefits and our grateful appreciation!

Membership

[Become a member](#) by buying shares with the option to be actively involved with Bread For Good.

Supporters

[Become a supporter](#) to be the first to know about events, and products as soon as they are available.

Soil to Slice

Set up a citizen science grain-growing group with [Soil to Slice](#).

Community Bakery

[Talk to us](#) about developing a community bakery or social enterprise development.

Breadmakers

Make your own Scottish-grown loaf with our heritage flour – [see our recipes here](#) for inspiration.

Keep in Touch

Sign up to receive our bi-monthly [newsletter](#).

[Instagram](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Twitter](#)

[Donations](#) to support our work are welcome and help us to do more. Thank you for your contribution.

Media of the Year

Our position at the mill-face of the pandemic's surging demand for flour saw Scotland The Bread receive regular media coverage: below is a selection, head to the [media page](#) of our website for the full list

NOVEMBER 2020 - INNOVATE UK

[Flour to the People](#) Project Coordinator Lyndsay Cochrane introduces our [Innovate UK Covid-19 rapid response funded project in this short video](#), and our Miller-Manager Connie Hunter explains the difference between our traditional wheat varieties and conventional bread wheats .

NOVEMBER 2019 - FARMERAMA

It's outwith the annual remit of this report, but it's worth highlighting again Farmerama Radio's splendid [Cereal](#), a six-part podcast featuring Scotland The Bread throughout the episodes.

JANUARY 2020 - DO PODCASTS

STB Chairman Andrew Whitley's 2008 DO Lecture 'Why Bread Needs Time', in which he sets out the case for a campaign for better bread, [is published as a podcast](#).

APRIL 2020 - ZEV

ROBINSON'S *REAL BREAD* BAKERS DOCUMENTARY

[Zev Robinson's 28-minute documentary](#) looked at bread, sourdough, community, local food, food supply chains and health benefits. It is available online, featuring interviewees including Scotland The Bread's Chairman Andrew Whitley. £1 of the £2.30 viewing fee goes to the [Real Bread Campaign](#), please watch and share this inspiring documentary to support the campaign for better bread.

REDISCOVERING WHEAT DIVERSITY FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD:

[This lecture](#) of Andrew's was updated for a special 'What's for Dinner?' extension to the *Rural Jersey Country Life* website in December 2020.

AUGUST 2020

[This is the Zoom recording](#) of a Q&A session with most of the film's interviewees as panelists, including Andrew Whitley.

JANUARY 2020 - SUSTAINABLE FOOD TRUST

The Sustainable Food Trust highlights Scotland The Bread in a piece examining [the future of wheat](#).

APRIL 2020 - THE HERALD

[Joanna Blythman explores](#) the Covid-19 pandemic's effect on home bread-making, pointing readers towards STB; [Mungoswells](#); the [Real Bread Campaign's 'Lockdown Loafers'](#); and [Riot Rye Bakehouse and Bread School](#).