

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**OUR RIGHT TO FOOD: NOURISH SCOTLAND SPEAKS OUT ABOUT OUR BASIC HUMAN RIGHT TO GOOD, AFFORDABLE FOOD**

**For immediate release:**

**Event about food poverty and our right to food in Scotland**

On Saturday 28th February Pete Ritchie – Nourish Scotland Director, is speaking at the event entitled [**Beyond Food Banks**](http://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/beyond-food-banks-growing-a-food-justice-movement-in-Scotland/) , held by Faith in Community Scotland, the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland and The Centre for Human Ecology. The conference is on responses to food poverty in Scotland and how we can move beyond emergency food aid to just and sustainable food systems.

Date:                  28th February 2015

Location:            Pearce Institute, 840-860 Govan Road, Glasgow G51 3UU

Time:                 10am-4pm

**Coinciding with this event Nourish is launching its latest** [**Nourish Scotland Magazine**](http://www.nourishscotland.org/#&panel1-1) **on the theme of Our Right to Food in Scotland**

The magazine expresses the Nourish stance as well as articles by leading food poverty experts. NB Click the banner link on the website homepage.

**The Nourish Scotland view: that food banks aren’t the right way forward**

“*One of the most striking images from last year’s Referendum debate was the carpet of food donations in George Square. However they voted, the people involved wanted to make a difference – and all food bank organisers and volunteers still do. But most people feel conflicting emotions – they have to do something to help, but it isn’t right that this should be happening*” said Pete Ritchie, Nourish Scotland Director.

Features of this new emerging food bank culture can be seen in the recent **All Party Parliamentary Group report ‘Feeding Britain’** (<http://foodpovertyinquiry.org/> ). **Its headline recommendation is a UK organisation supporting bigger and better food banks and up-scaling the diversion of excess supermarket food to poor people.**

**Nourish rejects this recommendation entirely.** Pete Ritchie, Nourish Director said “*The ‘national organisation’ has echoes of wartime emergency, as if a central committee is needed to ration scarce resources – when in reality here, as in the rest of the world, hunger is about poverty, not a shortage of food*”.

Food banks taking on extra advice functions makes no sense – when there is already a network of citizens advice bureaux, welfare rights services and specialist services for people with particular needs.

We also reject the idea that the food industry’s problem of disposing of surplus food should be solved by hungry individuals, by children’s homes, or by prisons. People who are at risk of being marginalised and disrespected should not be expected to eat the food no-one else wants.

The institutionalisation of food banks has a deeper consequence. Once they become part of the social fabric (as has happened in Canada) it is impossible not to support them – with fundraisers and sponsored runs and raffles. It gets harder and harder to ask why we have them in a wealthy modern country with an oversupply of food.

**So Nourish is calling for a new approach:**

**We start with the simple belief that nutrition is a public good and one for which the government has a core responsibility.** This is already accepted in many ways – the Food Standards Agency is there to make sure that our food is not adulterated and we provide free school meals and healthy start vouchers for young families. We just want to broaden this responsibility a little. We want the Scottish Government to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food.

**Nourish’s aspiration is for a Scotland where all of us can eat well without messing up the planet.** Programmes to promote public nutrition should also promote other public policy objectives by supporting community empowerment and co-operation, sustainable farming and fair supply chains.

**Nourish Scotland wants to work with many others to secure this right, including organisations working on issues of poverty and rights, churches and faith groups, community food and health projects, and childrens’ organisations.**

Pete Ritchie said “*This aspiration is, we believe, shared by the hundreds of communities helping out at food banks, the thousands of people relying on food banks, and the tens of thousands of people who don’t go to food banks but who struggle every week to feed their family*”.

Ends

Contact for interview:

Contact via Matilda Scharsach, Communications Manager: 0779 1082154 matilda@nourishscotland.org.uk or directly to

Pete Ritchie, Executive Director, Nourish Scotland: pete@nourishscotland.org.uk

Mobile: 07794 610148

Nourish Scotland Office: 0131 226 1497

Whitmuir Farm: 01968 661213