



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Guidance

for Traditional Allotments and
Community Led Gardening Projects

March 2016

Ministerial Foreword

Wales has always been a nation of growers. From our upland farmers raising the finest quality meat to the potato growers of Pembrokeshire, Wales and food production are synonymous. Our love of good food and our desire to provide high quality produce for our families has shaped the way we use our land, from the countryside to our back gardens. From our urban centres to rural villages across Wales, this desire to grow our own fruit and vegetables is stronger than ever and more and more people are enjoying the benefits of growing on allotments or at community gardens.

The benefits of gardening on individuals and the environment are clear. Increased physical activity and mental wellbeing, access to fresh, often organic fruit and vegetables and well used and cared for public spaces are natural by-products of growing your own. When gardening on an allotment plot or community garden, the added bonuses of closer community relationships, reduced social isolation and the chance to work together and celebrate with your neighbours are recognised as making a dramatic improvement to quality of life. For many, allotments and community gardens are seen as essential elements of living happier, healthier and more sustainable lives and as we work towards creating a healthier, happier and more sustainable Wales they have never been more important.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a clear obligation for public bodies to enable positive change that leads to a more resilient, secure and healthy Wales. By protecting and managing the current provision of allotments and growing spaces and supporting the demand-led development of new allotments and community growing projects, all public bodies in Wales can enable us to create a healthier and happier population and a more sustainable and secure food supply.

This guidance covers every aspect of allotments and community growing projects, with guidance on managing allotment sites to developing new allotment or community growing sites. It demystifies a range of topics from the legislation regarding allotments to how to design a new growing site.

The purpose of this guidance is to consolidate and celebrate what already exists, share and increase good practice and enable more people to get their hands dirty and grow their own.

This guidance is based on work undertaken on behalf of the Welsh Government by The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens



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Minister for Natural Resource

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This chapter defines statutory and temporary allotments, covers allotment strategies and gives examples of good practise. It sets out the benefits of encouraging community growing, clarifies the obligations of local authorities – and should be read in conjunction with Chapter 2: Allotments and the Law.

Aimed at local authority employees, community groups and allotment committees.

[Chapter 6: Other Public and Private Landowners – Advice for Working with Community Growing Groups](#)

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This chapter covers finding growers, clarifies concerns around statutory protection of land used for allotments, sets out the benefits to land owners and offers a useful case study.

Aimed at any land owner that is not a local authority – e.g. farmers and other private land owners, charities, the church, NHS.

[Chapter 7: Establishing a New Site: Finding Appropriate Land, Negotiating a Lease License or Agreement with the Landowner](#)

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This chapter helps define what kind of land you're looking for – and advises on how to find it and how to identify and approach the landowner. It explains the pros and cons of renting v. buying, and explains leases, what they must contain and how to get them drawn up. It also covers who can sign a lease, liability, and the different kinds of insurance you may need.

Aimed at community groups looking for land to set up a new community growing project or allotment site. Local authority employees and third sector employees supporting community groups looking for land.

[Chapter 8: A Good Group: Governance, Policies, Roles and Responsibilities, Conflict and Co-operation, Sustaining Volunteers](#)

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This chapter covers legal structures, policies, the roles and responsibilities of committee members, the life cycle of a group and how to deal with conflict.

Aimed at community groups – but may also provide a good insight for local authority staff or community development workers.

[Chapter 9: Funding and Finance](#)

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This chapter covers budgeting, handling money, the benefits of good financial management and community bank accounts. It goes on to cover raising funds in some detail – through grant funding but also through generating an income.

Aimed at primarily community growing/allotment groups who are self funding – rather than local authorities.

[Chapter 10: Design Guide](#)

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This chapter covers what to consider when designing a community garden or allotment and offers guidance on producing a base map and design. It also covers aspects of design specific to a community setting – and how to facilitate members of the group contributing meaningfully to the design.

Aimed at primarily community groups considering designing a new site –for a community garden or allotments. However this chapter would be useful for local authority officers and community development workers – and of interest to any gardener or plot holder.

[Chapter 11: School Grounds](#)

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This chapter serves as an introduction to using the school grounds in an imaginative and practical way to support learning and development. It offers enough information to get started but is also intended to inspire further research. Subjects covered include linking growing to the curriculum, what to do with a concrete or small space, habitats and Health and Safety, as well as a handy guide to growing with the school terms in mind.

[Chapter 12: Encouraging Biodiversity](#)

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This chapter will help you create Allotments and Community Growing sites that not only produce lots of crops but also support a diverse mix of wildlife and plants. The chapter includes information on hedges, wildflowers, creating habitats for wildlife and how to recognise and manage problem plants such as Japanese Knotweed.

Aimed at anyone involved in growing whether at home or on allotments or community growing projects and those that manage growing sites.

[Chapter 13: Additional Information and Resources](#)

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Chapter 1: Different Models of Allotments and Community Growing

There are lots of ways that people can get involved in growing. For people who want to work with their neighbours to improve the local environment and make their community a better place to be for people and wildlife, then maybe a community garden or orchard is the best option. For people with plenty of time and a desire to grow lots of fresh produce, traditional allotments are probably the best option. There is a wide range of opportunities for growing and lots of different types of projects. This chapter explains the most popular types of growing spaces.

Allotments

Allotments are probably the most well-known and understood model of growing in the community. Allotments are usually large areas of land divided up into smaller plots. The site is usually owned by the local authority, managed by an allotment association and the individual plots are cultivated by one person or family. The fruit and vegetables they grow are for their own consumption and not for sale. The plots are usually of a standard size and having a yearly charge for rent and services such as water provision.

For more information about allotments see www.nsalg.org.uk

Community allotments

Where there is a lack of traditional allotments available, some communities start groups that find land and create their own allotment site. These community allotments do not have a standard set rules, sizes or services as they are created by the community to meet their own needs.

For more information about community allotments see www.farmgarden.org.uk

Community farms

Community farms involve both growing plants and keeping animals. They are often larger and more extensive than community gardens or other community growing spaces. Community farms are working farms, producing meat, eggs etc. but also offer a wide range of volunteering and educational opportunities.

For more information about community farms see www.farmgarden.org.uk

Community gardens

Community gardens are usually started by local people who would like to grow food for their own use but also to benefit the wider community. Normally all growing on community gardens is done collaboratively by the volunteers. The idea is to share the work and then the reward. Most community gardens are open to everyone to join and do not have waiting lists.

For more information about community gardens see www.farmgarden.org.uk

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

A social enterprise scheme, based on a direct, active partnership between farmers (or a growing project) and the local community. CSA's normally produce fruit and vegetables that are shared out between its members who pay a monthly fee. CSAs are designed to share the risks and rewards of growing equally between the grower and the consumer.

For more information about community supported agriculture see

<http://www.communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/>

Community orchards

As well as providing fruit and a green haven for the local community, many community orchards are excellent wildlife habitats and carbon sinks. Community orchards are growing in popularity as they are easy to establish, low maintenance and can be used for community celebrations such as Apple Day.

For more information about community orchards see

<https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/starting-community-orchards-and-fruit-gardens>

<http://commonground.org.uk/projects/orchards/community-orchards>

Incredible Edible Schemes

Many towns in Wales are getting involved in the Incredible Edible movement. Incredible Edible schemes plant fruit and vegetables in public places for everyone to share. The produce is often grown in places with high footfall such as bus stops, town planters and alongside foot paths.

For more information on Incredible Edible schemes see -

<http://incredibleediblenetwork.org.uk/>

Abundance/fruit harvesting schemes

This is a growing movement that aims to make better use of neglected local fruit and nut trees by organising volunteers to harvest the fruit. The fruit is normally divided between the owner of the tree, the volunteer pickers and local charities and good causes.

For more information on abundance projects see

<http://growsheffield.com/abundance/>

Forest gardening

A low-maintenance sustainable plant-based food production and agroforestry system based on woodland ecosystems, incorporating fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, vines and perennial vegetables which have yields directly useful to humans. Forest gardens can be easily incorporated into public parks or woodlands.

For more information on forest gardening see - <https://www.agroforestry.co.uk/about-agroforestry/forest-gardening/>

Garden-share schemes

These schemes match and introduce committed, enthusiastic growers with local garden owners who want to see their gardens being used more productively. The agreement between the garden owner and grower usually stipulates when the grower can access the growing plot and the percentage of produce that will be given to the garden owner.

To see an example of garden-share see www.gardenshareconwy.org.uk

Meanwhile gardening

This is the temporary use of land for gardening and food growing. These schemes are particularly popular in areas with lots of unused land awaiting development. They can bring waste land into productive use for a defined period.

To see an example of meanwhile gardening see - <http://meanwhile-gardens.org.uk/>

Chapter 2: Allotments and the Law

Brief introduction

The law on allotments appears in several Acts of Parliament, some more than a century old.

The main Acts of Parliament that govern allotments are:

[Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908](#)

[Allotments Act 1922](#)

[Allotments Act 1925](#)

[Allotments Act 1950](#)

This legislation makes provision in relation to:

1. the use of individual plots, and
2. the provision and disposal of sites by local authorities.

Legislation concerning the provision and disposal of allotments only apply to statutory allotment sites owned by local authorities.

When we think of an allotment, we usually conjure up an image of a council owned site of individually tended vegetable plots, about 250m² each with a shed, growing extra-large onions and straight carrots. Within legislation these are termed “allotment gardens”. These are usually the type that an allotments authority has an obligation to provide. The more general term of “allotments” applies to all other plots, not just owned by the council and there can be a greater flexibility as to their use and size.

In this chapter, the term ‘plot’ means an individual allotment of the statutory size¹ (not exceeding 40 poles) or smaller though the law also applies to larger plots. ‘Site’ means a larger area on which a number of individual allotment plots are located.

Responsibility for allotments

The legislation provides that allotment authorities are responsible for providing and administering council owned allotments. The community councils and the counties or county boroughs² are allotment authorities. In the absence of a community council, the county or county borough is the sole allotment authority.

¹ Allotments Act 1922 s22(1) & Allotments Act 1950 s14(1)

² Local Government Wales Act 1994

See chapter 5 for further information about the responsibilities of allotment authorities.

Use of individual allotment plots

When an individual rents an allotment plot under an allotment tenancy agreement, (either on a council owned site or privately owned site) occupation of the plot is governed by the Allotments Act 1922³ and the content of the agreement itself.

The Allotments Act 1922 includes the following restrictions:

1. the notice period that has to be given to leave the plot⁴
2. what can be grown on the plot⁵
3. the size of an individual plot⁵
4. what can be done with the produce grown on the plot⁵
5. limits on sharing and transferring the plot⁶.

Ending a tenancy on an allotment plot

For an allotment authority to end an allotment tenancy, a notice to quit in writing needs to be served of twelve months' or longer, expiring on or before 6 April or on or after 29 September in any year⁷. This means that the tenancy ends in the winter months, so that there are minimal crops growing and that a new tenant can take over the plot in time for the new season⁸.

There is no legal requirement for the tenant to end the tenancy by giving a certain amount of notice. It is recommended this should be included in the written allotment agreement for the plot.

The allotment agreement should make provisions that the tenancy can be ended early if the rent is unpaid for a period (say 40 days) or if it is not cultivated to an appropriate standard. A typical provision would give one months' notice to quit for these circumstances. This means that allotment authorities can ensure that the plots

³ Small Holdings & Allotments Act 1908, Allotments Act 1922, Allotments Act 1925, Small Holdings & Allotments Act 1926, Allotments Act 1950.

⁴ Allotments Act 1922 s1 (1) (a)

⁵ Allotments Act 1922 s22 (1)

⁶ Small Holdings & Allotments Act 1908 s27 (4). Please see clause 4 of the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Model Tenancy Agreement between a landowner and individual tenant 2010 s4.

⁷ Allotments Act 1950 s 1

⁸ Allotments Act 1922 s1 (1) (a)

do not become neglected and unwanted plots can be quickly identified, vacated and offered to those on the waiting list.

What can be grown on a plot

An “allotment garden” plot is to be cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable and fruit crops⁹ Note, that this is specifically about an “allotment garden”, there is a lot more flexibility in what can be done on an “allotment”.

It is quite usual for allotment agreements to ban the growing of fruit trees or bushes on the plot. In the absence of specific prohibition, they can be grown and removed (if required) before end of the tenancy¹⁰ on both allotment gardens and allotments.

Animals on allotments

Under the 1950 Allotments Act, the keeping of rabbits and hens is permitted on allotments, as long as they are for the tenant’s own use and not for business or profit (1950 s12 (1)) It is important to note that the law excludes chickens and cockerels. The animals must not be kept in a way that makes them harmful to health, a nuisance, or their well-being is affected.

The keeping of bees, pigs, goats and other livestock is subject to the landlord’s permission and should be included in your tenancy agreement.

It is important to note that animals must not be kept on allotments unless they can be provided with appropriate levels of care and a suitable environment. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. The Act contains a duty of care to animals. This means that anyone responsible for an animal, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, must take reasonable steps to make sure the animal’s needs are met. This includes providing:

- a suitable diet
- a suitable environment
- the chance to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- a place to be housed with or apart from other animals
- protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Code of practice for the welfare of rabbits:

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/animalwelfare/pets/codes-of-practice/?lang=en>

⁹ Allotments Act 1922 s22(1)

¹⁰ Allotments Act 1922 s4 (1)

Laying hens:

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/animalwelfare/livestockwelfare/poultry/layinghens/?lang=en>

The Welsh Beekeepers Association and the National Bee Unit provide a wide range of beekeeping information.

<http://www.wbka.com/>

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/>

It is recommended that plot holders who keep animals should make a plan for what they will do to prevent/deal with:

- fire
- flood
- outbreak of disease
- when the tenancy ends.

The RSPCA 'Welfare of animals on allotments' guidance contains information about the specific needs of different species. It also sets out a number of steps that local authorities and allotment societies can take to deal with the keeping of animals on allotments.

<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Welfare-of-animals-on-allotments.pdf>

The size of the plot

A lot of emphasis has been made on the size of allotment garden plots, principally because of the legal requirement for the council to provide them and without defining the size this could prove to be a difficult task to fulfil. The 1922 Act states that an allotment garden is 40 poles which is $\frac{1}{4}$ acre or 1012 square metres. It is quite usual for half and quarter plots to be offered, as they are more suitable for modern lifestyles. Larger plots are allowed if it is an allotment, but there are no limits on how many plots an individual can have.

In urban areas where there is less land but a greater concentration of people, 20 poles is the maximum to be provided¹¹.

What can be done with the produce from the plot?

¹¹ Allotments Act 1950 Act & 1922 (13)

The Allotments Act 1922 s22 (1) states that the produce grown has to be wholly or mainly for the consumption of the plot holder and his family.

It's the use of the word mainly that gives the freedom to sell the surplus produce as well as the ability to grow a few flowers on our plot as well as keeping hens and rabbits.

However, specific allotment agreements might have further restrictions in them about trading, but this would be on a case by case/site by site basis.

Sharing and transferring the plot

An allotment cannot be sublet¹² without the permission of the allotment authority. Each allotment authority will have specific rules on who can take over a plot, or if you are allowed to share it or divide it. Most allotment agreements do not allow subletting, sharing or parting with possession without the consent of the allotments authority¹³ and to do so would be at risk of having notice served to end the tenancy.

The provision and disposal of allotments

Disposal

The Allotment Acts do not define temporary or statutory but it is a widely accepted description in the allotments world.

Statutory allotments sites

If a site has been acquired or appropriated by a local authority (of any type, from parish to county council) for the specific purpose of being used as allotments, then this site has special protection and is known as a 'statutory allotments'¹⁴ site.

If 6 local residents (technically: voters or council tax payers in local parliamentary constituency) want an allotment, and there are none available, then they can request the allotments authority to provide them¹⁵. The site that would be acquired for allotment gardens and the site would be designated as statutory allotments as it was obtained for the specific purpose of allotments. The Allotments Acts gives compulsory purchase powers to allotment authorities to obtain land for allotments¹⁶, although this is not often used. See chapter 5 for further information about allotment authorities' responsibilities.

¹² Allotments Act 1925 Act s24 (4)

¹³ Small Holdings & Allotments Act 1908 s27 (4) Please see clause 4 of the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Model Tenancy Agreement between a landowner and individual tenant 2010 s4

¹⁴ There is no reference in the Allotment Acts to "statutory"; it's a name that has come in to use to differentiate from "temporary".

¹⁵ Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s23 (2)

¹⁶ Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s25 & 39

It will remain a statutory allotment site even if the management of the site has been devolved, or a lease of the site granted from the local authority to an allotments association or similar managing body. Where management has been devolved¹⁷ or leased to an allotments association¹⁸ it is often known as a 'self-managed' site (see below).

Statutory allotments have legal protection. They cannot be sold or used for other purposes¹⁹ without the consent of Welsh Ministers. Consent will not be given unless the Welsh Ministers are satisfied that adequate provision will be made for allotment holders displaced by the action of the local authority, or that such provision is unnecessary or not reasonably practicable²⁰.

Temporary allotments sites

If land has been acquired or held by a local authority for another purpose, perhaps for future use as a school or housing development, but in the meantime is used as allotments, then these are known as 'temporary allotments'²¹ - even though they may be in use as allotments for decades.

¹⁷ Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s29

¹⁸ Allotments Act 1922 s22 (4)(b)

¹⁹ Snelling and another v Burstow Parish Council [2013] EWCA Civ 1411; [2013] WLR (d) 433

²⁰ Allotments Act 1925 s8

²¹ Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster.

For example, if a school on a local authority-owned site decided to fence off part of its playing field and create allotments to be let out to local people, this would be a temporary allotment site as the land was not originally acquired for allotment provision.

Frequently, land bought for future expansion of a cemetery – which in some cases can take place many years in advance of need - is used as allotments in the meantime and will be a temporary allotment site. However, there is no single point of reference for identifying whether allotments sites are designated as temporary or statutory and some historical research may be necessary to check their legal status.

Temporary allotments do not benefit from statutory protection regulating their provision and disposal. This means that there are no special statutory limits on changing their use or disposing²² of them aside from the usual planning system requirements which regulates operational development and material change of use.

Privately owned allotments sites

If allotments are on a privately owned site, then like temporary allotments there is no statutory protection regulating their provision and disposal. Both temporary and private allotments (whether the whole site or an individual plot) can be leased to a community group and tenancies do not need to be on allotment agreement leases, although these may be appropriate to use. See chapter 6 for further information about privately owned sites.

For further information

There are plenty of other excellent publications covering this including *The Law of Allotments* by Paul Clayden, published by Shaw & Sons (currently in its 5th edition). Advice is also available from the National Allotments Society www.nsalg.org.uk.

²² London Government Act 1963 s55(4)

Chapter 3: Allotment Waiting Lists - Recording and Managing Demand

Introduction

The majority of this chapter is aimed at local authorities with information on good practice. It will also be useful for growers to know what they should expect and suggestions on how to improve growing opportunities in their area.

Good practice

In order to provide an accurate picture of the provision of allotment plots across Wales, local authorities should compile a register of allotment sites and details of plot numbers, vacancies and waiting lists. Local authorities should also clearly advertise how potential allotment gardeners can register for a plot and record all enquiries. Recording demand for allotments is imperative - so that you can ensure growing space is provided in the areas of high demand.

All local authorities should have a member of staff responsible for allotments and community growing spaces to ensure this information is collected, maintained and used to inform new provision. An Allotments Officer provides a vital link between the local authority, allotment associations and potential growers.

Having robust systems in place will make it easier and more efficient (in terms of staff time) to manage waiting lists and deal with demand.

Allotments strategy

Each allotment authority should develop and make available on their website an allotments strategy.

An allotments strategy should:

- encourage access and the benefits from engaging with allotments and alternatives available in the region
- include a clear and simple procedure for obtaining an allotment
- include tenancy rules
- link up relevant policies and simply explain the rights and laws around allotments and any policies needed to be highlighted
- map and describe all local provision including onsite facilities
- include costs and justification, relative costs to UK average
- include a clear strategy for communication, allotment provision, waiting lists, activity, feedback, reports
- link to local and national support organisations
- include a chapter explaining and sharing links to alternatives to allotments style growing.(i.e. community growing projects, landshare schemes)

- include the agreed collective plans for developing allotment provision across the authority
- explain simply the management process, data recording and reports
- share the action points and timeframes.

Examples of allotment strategies

Vale of Glamorgan Council	http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes_agendas_and_reports/reports/scrutiny_ee/2012/12-04-17/allotment_strategy.aspx
Bridgend County Borough Council	http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/media/147344/BCBC_Allotment_Strategy_2010_2021.pdf
Conwy County Borough Council	http://www.conwy.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/452/allotment_strategy_300311.pdf
Wrexham County Borough Council	http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/env_services/allotments/allotment_strategy.pdf

Opening up more information about provision and budgets can enable a more collaborative approach with the general public, third sector and business sector to find new ways of working and tackling the financial and resource shortfall.

The allotment strategy can act as a useful tool for public awareness and engagement. It is important that there is public input as many allotment sites are run by voluntary groups and rely heavily on their enthusiasm and energy. A collaborative process will ensure better acceptance of the strategy built on best practice from all parties involved and allow for transparency in the process.

Reconciling different management and recording systems

Individual allotment sites may be managed in different ways by voluntary or paid staff but the overall responsibility for the provision of allotments lies with the local authority. Local authorities must be able to report on the demand and provision to the Welsh Government.

Different sites currently have different management and record systems including paper and electronic systems. All record systems should feed into regular updates to website information where a contact form and waiting list/availability is publicised.

Even if a site is privately managed it is still helpful for a local authority to receive data on the site's waiting lists. It is good practice for the private allotment site's committee

to record data and according to their data protection policy share this data with the local authority should it be requested.

The following list is a suggestion of records that should be kept:

- waiting lists
- site statistics and inventory
- tenant information
- details of site representatives
- association details and relevant legal documents, e.g. lease, constitution
- financial information – rents and expenditure
- complaints, termination of tenancies
- site and plot inspections (including digital images of problem areas);
- risk assessments
- insurance.

Site record systems

The details of tenants and waiting list numbers may be held by site allotment associations or management committees where the site has either total or partial management responsibility. Where sites are responsible for their own tenant register and waiting lists, they should submit this information to the local authority regularly to allow for county wide reporting. It is recommended that all local authorities provide clear guidance to sites about what information is captured and in what format. This will facilitate easier reporting across the county and enable the collation of the county register.

The minimum information requested by local authorities should be:

- full names and contact details of all tenants and allocated plot numbers
- full address and contact details of all people on the waiting list including the date the person joined the waiting list and their current position in the list.
- any changes in tenancies or allotment provision on site and corresponding details e.g. new plots being created or the introduction of community growing spaces open to non-allotment holders
- the names and contact details of the management committee. At least one direct contact should be made publicly available for every site and this should be publicly displayed at the site and provided to the local authority for public display on their website. If people would rather not give their personal details an email address can be created for the purpose.

Data Protection

Local authorities will be well aware of their Data Protection responsibilities but allotment committees may need signposting to further information. They may be

understandably wary of sharing information. It's worth suggesting that they get permission to share contact information with the local authority. If they are concerned there is a guide available from the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action

<http://www.wcva-ids.org.uk/wcva/1116>

Options for record systems

Paper Records

For small allotment sites using a hard copy system could be seen as the safest and quickest method of record keeping and managing the waiting list and day to day operations. Paper records have limited access which is good for data protection. However, they have the risk of data loss if the records are lost or damaged as there is no backup. Also reporting to the local authority may necessitate the time-consuming conversion into an electronic format. Paper records can also be difficult for new committee members to manage if the system is unclear.

Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets are a simple way of recording site information. They can be made secure with passwords for data protection. Depending on their complexity, they may be able to update & check duplication of individuals against multiple sites.

Databases

Databases are more advanced than spreadsheets and are preferred storage for data where there are many levels of information needing to be tracked and stored. In a spreadsheet you may delete information to input new information but in a database details can be protected and stored.

One feature of a database which other recording methods can't offer is to automatically create and hold a unique identifier(s) or 'primary key' for the allotment applicant/tenant, meaning that you will not have duplicates on waiting list reports. This unique identifier could be linked to a reference code that can be published on the allotment waiting list or website - so data protection is covered. The unique identifier will also stop duplicate identities being created in the database.

If there is a lot of sensitive information that needs to be secured, databases offer better security especially when on a shared server or online.

Setting up a database is not straight forward. It may be beneficial to use a management package designed for allotments

Purpose built allotment management software

There is a variety of software available, all with different features and price structures. It's worth talking to other local authorities about their systems. Wrexham and Conwy use MCPC Design Colony software, which allows managers of devolved sites to input information directly, and works with mobile devices, allowing instant transfer of images and information from site inspections.

Utilising GIS linked packages across local authority departments can save time, money and inform decision making process about best development or use of assets. If asset mapping is made publicly available it also means greater transparency and less staff time spent dealing with requests for information.

If you capture requests for allotments in areas where provision is not available or post code data for those currently on waiting lists who have not had their demand met you can use this data to populate maps showing hotspots for demand and areas of low uptake. This can be a useful tool to support addressing allotment demand in those regions.

Allotment management software can also improve communication and waiting list management. For example you can generate a letter to everyone on the waiting list requiring a reply if they still want a plot. Most waiting lists could be significantly reduced by removing people who have moved or no longer want a plot.

Dealing with Demand

Allotments have seen a resurgence in the last 15 years. It is vital that demand is recorded, including demand in areas where there is currently no allotment provision within a reasonable distance.

Local authorities are *obliged to consider representation*, and to provide what is in their opinion a sufficient number of allotments. (See Chapter 2: Allotments and the Law)

It is hoped that local authorities do their duty in considering meeting demand for new sites in the spirit of the law. There are several ways this can be achieved:

- geographically map demand and provide new sites on local authority land
- buy or lease private land (if no suitable local authority land is available)
- allocate new development sites as mixed use to include allotments and use developer contributions to establish sites
- support community groups, community or town councils to set up allotment sites
- manage waiting lists more effectively, provide half plots, and even starter plots. Often there are many people on waiting lists who will find once they get

an allotment that they don't really have the time to keep up with it. Having quarter size starter plots will give people an idea of what's involved. However you should retain the option to have full plots and not just divide your plots until you've seemingly met demand

- collate details of community growing projects in the area and make this information available on the allotments webpage. Some people may be happy to grow with others rather than having their own individual plot

An allotment strategy, support for allotments from the Leader and Executive, and the inclusion of allotments and community growing in the Local Development Plan is important. If a local authority's targets and goals include health promotion by encouraging community growing then a community group or allotment officer will have a much stronger case for accessing a piece of Local Authority land. Or including allotments in a development using developer contributions (Section 106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy) This can be supported as mitigation for the loss of green space. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 will also strengthen the case for Local Authorities to consider the wider benefits of sustainability and resilience when assessing land access and usage.

Communication

Effective communication and consultation with allotment associations, plot holders and people on waiting lists is an essential component of good practice.

It is important when managing waiting lists and sites:

- that allotment managers communicate with all parties, to keep contact information up to date
- there are systems in place to communicate meetings, rules, events and site news with their tenants and people on the waiting lists e.g. notice boards, site reps, newsletters, personalised emails or letters, websites, forums and social media are all popular ways to keep up to date. Where personal or sensitive information is shared, refer to and respect confidentiality and data protection policies.

There should be a sign on each local allotment gate, stating:

- what the site is
- clearly stated point of contact
- how to find out more.

Webpages

It is recommended that each local authority has a dedicated allotments webpage with:

- contact information for the allotment officer and representatives from devolved sites
- a contact form to record enquiries – including latent demand (direct contact details should also be provided)
- the Local Authority Allotment Strategy
- details about each site, including a map, current waiting list, number of plots, facilities and cost
- links to websites and blogs for devolved sites
- links to external organisations that can offer help and advice - about provision and accessing other kinds of community growing projects e.g. National Allotment Society, Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, Community Land Advisory Service, Groundwork and Keep Wales Tidy.

It's worth having a look at other local authorities' web pages – they differ widely. Wrexham County Borough Council offers a good example.

Allocating plots

Most allotment sites will have a plot allocation policy. The simplest process is to give the person at the top of the list the vacated plot. However there are often clauses that include family members having the option of inheriting a plot, or, where people have been sharing a plot (but the tenancy was held by one) the other should have the option of taking over the plot. It is worth recording that an allotment is being shared so the tenancy can be transferred easily.

If an allotment site is close to the border between local authority areas it should be accessible to people from either county. Through collaborating and sharing information, local authorities would be better able to meet local demand more efficiently.

However small and friendly the site, it is worth having a non-cultivation policy, so a plot can be reclaimed when it is not used. These policies should be included with the tenancy agreement to avoid disagreements. People should be supported if they have a temporary life situation that means they can't cultivate a long standing plot. You can also offer to split plots to make them easier to manage. It is also worth bearing in mind that people might be managing their plot according to permaculture principles which may mean their plot looks less traditional. Leaving areas of your plot uncultivated for wildlife or leaving plants to flower or go to seed for birds and pollinators, should also be encouraged and not penalised.

Supporting community groups to set up new sites

Where communities are actively trying to set up new allotment sites, local authorities should support them as much as possible. There should be a named member of staff within the local authority to provide help and guidance. Contact details, information and advice should be clearly available on the local authority website with details of how to access local authority land and what to do if none is available. It is recommended that local authorities display third party links to charities that can advise and support community groups.

Often community groups can apply for capital funding that is unavailable to local authorities and so a new allotment site can be set up at very low cost to the local authority.

What to do if your local authority isn't meeting demand

- Try and find out what the situation is – how sites and waiting lists are being managed – how many people are waiting etc.
- try and assess local demand if your local authority can't provide the information e.g. through newspaper articles, notices in shops and on lamp posts, social media
- if the local authority is not able to set up a new site, try and access some local authority land and set up a community managed site
- talk to your town or community council about their powers to set up new sites
- ultimately you can do it yourself – lease land privately or from a public body or charity. You can find further information on how to do this in the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens Community Growing Resource Pack <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-wales>
- talk to your local councillors to make the case for allotments. Get in touch with the National Allotment Society to see if they can help.

Summary

The responsibility for maintaining accurate waiting lists and managing demand ultimately lies with the local authority. If there is no clear picture of provision then latent demand will continue to be unmet. The Welsh Government expects local authorities to recognise the social and environmental benefits of allotments and seek to both meet demand directly and by supporting the establishment of community growing sites.

- Maintain accurate records of allotment sites, plot numbers and sizes, and waiting lists

- record latent demand by asking people to register interest should allotments become available in their area. Map this demand and consider ways of providing new sites in areas of high demand
- have a clear and informative web page with contact form and direct contact details of named responsible staff members
- develop an allotment strategy
- have a named champion within the council for community groups who want to set up new sites

Further reading and links

Growing in the Community second edition, LGA 2010

http://www.local.gov.uk/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/4045787/PUBLICATION

A Place to Grow – LGA 2010

http://www.local.gov.uk/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/4045883/PUBLICATION

Chapter 4: Planning Guidance for Local Authorities and Groups

This guide will provide you with advice on what to do before embarking on your project. Please read the guide as a whole.

If you go ahead with a development without the required planning permission, the local planning authority may ask you to make a retrospective planning application. If they decide that permission should not be granted, they may require you to put things back as they were.

Finding land for our growing project – bearing planning in mind

Chapter 7 provides advice on where to start looking for land for your project but you also need to think about whether you need planning permission for any structures or uses on the site in order for the project to operate. Always do this in advance of deciding what site location you want to use.

Growing food on land – does this need planning permission?

Growing fruit and vegetables on land is classed as agriculture (even on an allotment site²³) As agriculture is not included within the meaning of development in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 it may be acceptable to use any piece of land as an allotment or community growing project without the need to apply for planning permission. The RTPI (Royal Town Planning Institute) have as recently as 2011 confirmed that planning permission would not be required to use any land for allotments of an agricultural nature. However, this does not apply to land being used for leisure purposes, for example, the laying out and keeping of a lawn.

Sheds and other structures – is planning permission required?

Planning permission is only needed if the work being carried out meets the statutory definition of ‘development’ which is set out in [Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#).

Development is

“The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land”

Certain developments can be done without the need for planning permission. This is known as ‘permitted development’.

Some relevant permitted development rights are listed below:

²³ See *Crowborough Parish Council v Secretary of State for the Environment* November 1980

- on land which is part of the residential curtilage of a domestic dwelling house (a residential garden)
- a local authority can erect ancillary buildings of less than 200 cubic metres and less than 4 metres in height, on land belonging to or maintained by them. This includes town and community councils and buildings in school grounds that are maintained by the authority. The structure must be erected by the local authority. Allotment holders themselves needing to erect structures do not benefit from this right even if the land is owned by the local authority
- a structure on an agricultural unit (farm) of more than 5 hectares where the structure meets certain criteria and is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on that unit
- the erection of a building on the site of a school, college, university or hospital, within certain criteria.

You should note that this guidance is not an authoritative interpretation of the law. That is a matter for the courts. You should get advice from your local planning authority if there is any doubt whether your proposal would be permitted development. You should also note that the local planning authority may have removed some of your permitted development rights by issuing an Article 4 direction. This will mean that you have to submit a planning application for work which normally does not need one.

Currently there are no permitted development rights for allotment holders or community growers.

One of the problems for planning legal professionals is whether objects placed on land which are allegedly 'portable' or 'moveable' or 'temporary' are in truth buildings or structures, of a permanent nature, that come within the definition of development and thus require planning permission.

A good starting point is to assume that most buildings, however small and seemingly insignificant, will require planning permission.

It has been suggested in the past that some sheds or other structures, if they are moveable or not attached to the ground, do not amount to development. Three questions need to be answered²⁴:

1. Is the building large enough that it needs to be built on site rather than brought onto the site ready-made?
2. Does the construction suggest a degree of permanence (physically attached to the ground /can only be removed by taking it to pieces)?
3. Is the intention to keep the structure there permanently?

²⁴ Cardiff Rating Authority v Guest Keen Baldwins Iron and Steel Company 1949

If the answer to any of these questions is yes then it is likely that it is ‘development’ and planning permission is required.

Fencing

Any means of enclosure including a fence, wall or gate can be built without planning permission provided it is less than 1 metre high adjacent to a highway (road) or 2 metres high anywhere else except within the boundaries of a listed building²⁵.

Hard standing areas and access paths

Your growing project may need to have a hard standing area for car parking or meeting space purposes. It may also be desirable to have access paths put in or vehicle access. All these works are development and do require planning permission. Very small areas may be regarded as ‘de minimus’ which means it is so small it does not warrant intervention by the local planning authority. You should speak to your planning authority about this before starting works.

Raised beds

A raised bed could be classed as a structure or an engineering operation requiring permission. In very many cases they are be classed as ‘de minimus’ meaning they are so small they do not warrant intervention by the local planning authority. The larger the bed the more it is likely to require planning permission. You should speak to your local planning authority about this before starting work.

Planning permission is required – what should I do?

Pre application advice

The Planning Portal website outlines how the planning system works in Wales and how to apply www.planningportal.gov.uk.

It is advisable to get the local authority planning department to tell you what they think will be the material factors in deciding your planning application. They will want to know the proposed location/ address of your project and measurements in terms of height, width and depth of the structure. It is recommended that you provide a location plan and a scale drawing of the structure.

The following factors are considered pertinent to the consideration of a planning application for development on an allotment or community growing project. These factors are known as **material planning considerations** (not exhaustive) –

1. Whether the proposed location is in the countryside or within the built up limits of a settlement.

²⁵ General Permitted Development Order 1995, Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A

2. The design of the structure or engineering operation and how appropriate it is in its proposed location and surroundings.
3. What impact will the proposed building and its use have on neighbouring properties and uses?
4. Is any car parking required for the use of the structure?
5. How will the structure be accessed off the nearest road?
6. Can people walk, cycle or use sustainable modes of transport to get to the site of the structure or works?
7. Remember also that material planning considerations only relate to the development that you are applying for planning permission for. There may be other structures e.g. a fence that does not require planning permission. Do not include these works in the planning application. This also applies to the use of the site, remembering that agricultural use of land does not amount to development. So, for example, if you are applying for a tool shed on a community garden you only need to include the tool shed in the description and build a case for the tool shed in the planning application documents. You do not need to show a case for the community garden use.

Gaining pre application advice²⁶ from the local planning authority on the likelihood of gaining planning permission is a good idea. There may be a charge for the pre application advice and it may take time to get a response. If you add this onto the statutory 8 week period local authorities have in which to try to determine a planning application you could be waiting 3 months to get your planning decision. Pre application advice will provide an applicant with a better indication of the likelihood of their proposal receiving planning permission or not, although this is informal advice and not a guarantee of the final decision.

It is useful to consider the time frame for determining planning applications if you want to fit your project in with the growing seasons. For example to start growing in March you may well need to submit your planning application in the November beforehand in order to get your planning permission in place and get the works completed in time.

The planning system in Wales and settlement boundaries

Each local authority is required to prepare a local development plan (LDP) for its area²⁷. The planning system in Wales manages the development and use of land in the public interest. The basis for the development plan is to give the developer and the public certainty about the type of development that will be permitted at a given

²⁶ Pre Application Practice Guide ref: <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/120530preapppracticeguideen.pdf>

²⁷ The Town and Country Planning Act 1990

location. Applications for planning permission should be made in accordance with the LDP unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For many years, planning has sought to conserve the countryside and enhance the urban environment. Most permissible development is confined to within settlement boundaries. A settlement boundary is a line drawn on a map around a city, town or village which denotes where development will be acceptable in principle.

When choosing your site it is recommended to try to pick one that is within settlement boundaries or in the urban area. If you want to build structures on the site it will be easier to gain planning permission as this is where most development is directed to. Anything beyond the settlement boundary line is countryside and stricter policies apply.



The purple line in this image denotes the settlement boundary of Llysfaen (as provided in the Conwy Local Development Plan 2007- 2022)

Development in the countryside and a landmark planning appeal decision

Planning appeal APP/Z6950/A/14/2227169 of 2015²⁸ has provided clarity on community growing development in the countryside. The Roundhouse Partnership dug some ponds for water irrigation purposes on their community growing project.

The Planning Inspector ruled “*The ponds are vital sustainable drainage, essential to sustain productive agricultural use.*”

The Inspector decided that the ponds would have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the countryside due to their *small scale and natural appearance*.

It was further decided that community growing of this nature does not breach a requirement to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land.

It is important to note that any proposal must be determined on its own merits.

²⁸ <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?caseid=2227169>



Minimising the impact – a good practice guide

There are things that you can do to help minimise the impact of development on your allotment or growing site.

1. Minimise the impact of sheds and other structures in the landscape by locating them adjacent to a boundary hedge or on lower lying land. Or have one tool storage area instead of on individual plots throughout the development site. Buildings in the countryside need to look agricultural in appearance so a domestic garden shed might not be acceptable. Speak to your local planning authority about the type of structure that might be considered.
2. It is part of the basics on a community growing project but, always make sure you engage the local community in your project. Be mindful of the impact structures and growing activity will have on the enjoyment of neighbouring properties. Speak to the neighbours and ask them the type of design they would like to see and a preferred location for any structures.
3. The design of your growing space should not just be functional to your purposes. Think about how it will look from near to the site and further away in the landscape. Have visually pleasing boundaries such as natural hedgerows and wildflower planting.
4. Can the structures you place on the site be made to look more attractive with planting around them or use of different materials
5. It may be necessary to put in pathways and even a road to your growing space. Always use materials that are appropriate to the surroundings and think about mitigating surface water run-off. Use permeable surfaces rather than Tarmac.
6. Think of innovative ways to harvest water from the structures. The obvious use for the water is to irrigate your crops but this will also help prevent run off and flooding to adjacent properties.
7. Locate your site close to the community who is going to be using it. If users are able to walk or cycle to the site you will be able to demonstrate the site is in a sustainable location and will be well used. Nearby public transport links are also a bonus.
8. To back up policies in the local development plan, local authorities have to carry out an open space assessment which shows how much open space

they are making available in their local authority. Open space largely needs to be open and accessible to all. If your growing project fits these criteria then your project will be more acceptable so try not to put fences up and allow all members of the public to access it. In many areas vandalism isn't a big issue.

9. Tell your local ward Member (Councillor) and other people in the community what you are doing. Offer to involve them in your plans and ask for their support.

Planning application fees

Submitting a planning application will involve a fee. Speak to your local planning authority regarding planning application fees or check the Planning Portal webpages www.planningportal.gov.uk.

Documents to submit with your planning application

Planning application forms are available on the Planning Portal website www.planningportal.gov.uk. Check with your local planning authority or the Planning Portal webpages about the documents that need to be submitted. Documents may include:

1. A completed Planning Application form, including a description of the development for which you are applying for permission. Only include the works/ structure/s that require planning permission.
2. The relevant fee
3. A certificate stating that the applicant owns the land or has notified the owner of their intention to submit a planning application.
4. A location plan with the application area outlined in red and any other land owned by the applicant edged in blue. Be careful to keep the red line area small but around the development that you are applying for. This site area will affect the planning application fee. Local Authorities usually ask for this plan to be on an Ordnance Survey base at a scale of 1:1250 or 1:2500 showing enough of the surrounding area to allow the site to be located.
5. Scaled drawings of the structure or works that you're applying for planning permission for. This would usually include a layout plan and elevations. This is so the planning officers can judge the potential impact of the development on the surrounding area. All plans should have a title and a scale.
6. Written confirmation of the materials to be used on all aspects of the development.
7. A Design and Access Statement will be required for some planning applications.
8. A supporting statement or supplementary information in the form of a letter or report which explains how many people will use the development and a short summary of why the development is required. How the development

conforms to planning policies would also be useful information for the planning officer but is not absolutely necessary. If further information is required, it will be requested.

Try to provide everything upon first submission to avoid unnecessary delays.

Upon submission

Most planning applications are submitted online via the planning portal website <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/>. Once an application has been submitted, it will be considered by the local planning authority.

If registered, the application will be allocated a planning application reference number. You will be written to and provided with the name of the planning officer. Various people and consultees will be notified of the planning application and will be given 21 days to provide comments.

The planning officer may carry out a site visit and assess the impact of the proposal on the surrounding area.

If objections are received and they are considered 'material'²⁹ to the planning application the officer must consider them.

Some planning applications can be dealt with under delegated powers and others need to be considered by the local authority's planning committee. If the application must be considered by the planning committee, it may take a little longer to determine.

We have our planning decision – what next?

Gaining planning permission for your development does not always mean you can go ahead with it straight away. Check the wording of the description of development on the decision notice. Does it cover all the works you want to carry out? Check the conditions on the planning decision notice. It is very important that you comply with these conditions.

Our application has been refused – what now?

In the decision notice the planning authority must clearly set out their reasons for refusal. Take time to consider them. If you still do not understand them you should speak to the planning officer.

If you think you can overcome these concerns, you may wish to submit another planning application for consideration.

²⁹ relevant, pertinent to the development

If, following discussions with the planning officer, you still feel you have a good case based on the information provided with the planning application submission you can appeal the decision to the Planning Inspectorate.

If you do not want to appeal or resubmit an application, you can see if you can carry on without the development (structure or works) on your site. You could choose to find a different, more appropriate site, where you may be able to get planning permission for the development.

Things to remember

- it is your responsibility for seeking, or not seeking planning permission
- your local planning authority is responsible for considering planning applications
- planning permission should be granted (if needed) before any work begins.

Chapter 5: Local Authorities: Responsibilities, Duties and Powers

The provision of allotments is a statutory obligation placed on local authorities. Allotments should be provided to meet local demand and enable the benefits of food production and outdoor recreation to be enjoyed by all sectors of the community. There are opportunities for local authorities to work with local people to ensure adequate facilities are provided. This chapter sets out the responsibilities, duties and powers of local authorities and outlines examples of good practice.

Demand, management and promotion

The Small Holding and Allotments Act 1908 placed a duty on local authorities to provide allotments according to demand; it made provisions for local authorities to compulsorily purchase land to provide allotments and established the framework for the modern allotments system.

In addition to local authorities, Town and Community Councils have the powers to provide allotments and the duty to consider providing allotment gardens if the demand is unsatisfied³⁰.

Where demand is high there is a need to create new allotment sites. Chapter 7 discusses in detail the process of establishing new sites.

The management arrangements for local authority owned allotments sites vary. Some local authorities manage their own sites, while others lease land to community organisations, community councils or allotment associations who manage the sites on behalf of the local authority.

The approach regarding the promotion and encouragement of allotment uptake and the resources available for their maintenance varies between local authorities. Many local authorities have specific allotment policies where their management approach is clearly set out.

Local authorities and community led growing

Through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015³¹ local authorities are expected to give due consideration for the sustainability benefits of community led growing projects in particular on the subject of approvals, funding and range of other regulatory measures.

The prevalent community led growing projects include:

³⁰ Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, ss 23, 26 and 42

³¹ [WellBeingActEssentials](#)

- community gardens and allotments
- community/city farms
- community supported agriculture
- Incredible Edible schemes
- community orchards
- care farms
- school farms

Promotion and partnerships

The wider benefits of community led growing are increasingly being identified. Local authorities can be at the forefront of developing and promoting these projects for their population. Headline social issues such as food poverty, reliance on food banks, health and wellbeing and waste are being tackled by placing community growing at the heart of food policy through promoting local food and produce, partnership working and community resilience.

Local authorities can help facilitate the development of new community growing projects. For example local authority estates departments could have lists of sites suitable for community growing. Monmouthshire County Council, through their Community Growing Policy, have supported community-led growing by formalising the process for underused council land to be brought into community use for growing projects. They have produced a leaflet explaining which land is eligible, how applications can be made and how they will be determined. They have also established a simple legal agreement template that is used to formalise the access arrangements that protect the interests of both the community group and the council.

Benefits of community growing projects for local authorities

There are a large number of community growing projects across all parts of Wales. With the various benefits that these projects offer there is an opportunity for local authorities to work closely with these groups to support them and form mutually beneficial relationships. There are numerous benefits for local authority departments including:

- environmental health: use of derelict or underused land which can be eyesores or locations for fly-tipping
- social care: research has shown that community led growing project can benefit social cohesion, physical and mental health
- education: community led growing projects can be a resource for education establishments to demonstrate what it takes to produce food from field to fork. They also provide extensive opportunities to learn about the environment and climate change and how to make positive changes to help combat these challenges.

Approvals

Depending on the type of community growing project, it is possible that they will need some form of approval from the local authority. The following are some of the approvals that should be considered when developing a community led growing project

- planning permission: if changing the use of the land
- building control: if undertaking construction work
- environmental health: if carrying out commercial food production e.g. cooking
- landscaping /parks approval: if there is a need to carry out works to trees especially Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

Community asset transfer

This involves the transfer of the ownership of land or buildings from organisations such as local authorities to community groups³². It presents opportunities for the community to own and manage facilities. Communities are often well placed to deliver or help provide vital local services tailored to the needs of their residents.

Best practice

Cardiff Council: The Cardiff Allotment Strategy is based around three clearly defined aims:

1. a well-managed allotment service
2. a sustainable allotment service
3. accessible allotments

To deliver their aims and objectives they have an Action Plan. They have a Local Management Agreement which was developed to allow site associations to take on some of the management responsibilities for their site in return for a financial grant

Wrexham County Borough Council has formed a unique partnership with the Community Land Advisory Service, Wales (CLAS Cymru) to promote and develop community growing in Wrexham and the surrounding area. The initiative, the first of its kind in North Wales, aims to clear red tape around issues like planning and leases, making it easier and simpler to setup and sustain local food growing projects.

Conwy County Borough Council's Allotment Strategy outlines the council's vision to provide the people of Conwy with an allotment service that meets their needs and expectations and prepares for allotments of the future. The strategy recognises the challenges faced, including availability of suitable land to meet the increasing demand, and seeks to find innovative ways to overcome the challenges.

³² <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/community-asset-transfer/?lang=en>

City and County of Swansea has demonstrated a commitment to supporting residents to grow food, eat healthy and come together as a community. They have produced a guidance document, called Our Growing Community, to help communities in Swansea explore more ways and new places to grow their own fruit and vegetables. It is part of a number of measures aimed at supporting Swansea to become a Sustainable Food City.

Chapter 6: Other Public and Private Landowners – Advice for Working with Community Growing Groups

In recent years, many people have recognised the benefits of growing their own food and establishing community gardens or associated green spaces. The result has been a dramatic surge in demand for suitable plots of land in both urban and rural areas. In turn, this has led to a shortage of statutory land, such as allotments, and a growing need for alternative solutions.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 introduced new obligations on different public bodies to make sure that they are acting in a sustainable manner, not just considering the here and now, but also future generations. Food growing in an environmentally friendly way, meets this agenda and even more so when done by the community. This means that for both the public and private sector, the benefits delivered through community growing are being recognised and developed.

There are many different forms of community gardens, including allotments/allotment-type plots, community growing areas, therapeutic gardens, school gardens and orchards. New projects are evolving all the time. These different types of growing can take place on any land, not just council land. A growing range of landowners have successfully offered their land for community gardening including; farmers, developers, the NHS, estate owners, housing associations, universities, retailers and public bodies such as Network Rail.

There are understandable apprehensions from some landowners about turning over land for community food growing and other gardening uses. There are concerns about how this can be made to happen in an efficient and cost effective way.

It's understandable that you may be anxious about leasing your land to community groups. Perhaps you have not done this before. Alternatively, perhaps you have, or you know someone else who has, and the relationship with the community has been problematic.

If done properly and openly, it can be beneficial to all parties.

Suitable land

You may not think that the surplus land you have available would be suitable. However there are many innovative ways of growing on a small scale, utilising volunteer labour. Each case will present its own challenges due to different land ownership and tenure, the different characteristics of the site and surroundings, as well as the proposed use of the land. However most issues can be overcome through detailed discussion and having the correct legal agreement in place.

The amount of land required will differ depending on what the proposed growing use is. Community growing can take place on anything from a tiny 2m x 2m plot, through

to 10 acres for a community supported agriculture (CSA) project, growing vegetables for a box scheme feeding 40 families.

If you have long term plans for your land, that doesn't mean that the land can't be used for growing in the meantime. Some really great projects have happened on development land, on a short term basis, moving on when the planning permission is granted and development is about to start. So long as everyone involved knows from the start that it is a "meanwhile" use and everyone is kept well informed of the progress of the development. The advantage is that land that would otherwise lay empty and unused, can be put to good use by community groups in a way that brings benefits and opportunities for local people and the landowner. The obvious disadvantage is that much hard work could go into establishing a site, only for that work to be disrupted if the land then reverts to its original purpose in a short time period.

Rent

This depends on what you want to achieve. Some landowners:

- let their land for free (for example disused or neglected land in urban areas)
- let their land for a nominal/at cost sum (such as the National Trust)
- rent the land out at a market rate (for example normal farm-land rental charge).

Finding growers

- contact your local council who may be able to help you find growers, especially if it has an allotment waiting list
- contact your local Transition group who may be a good source of people who are looking for land
- contact nearby growing projects who might want extra land
- try advertising or putting an article in the local press
- contact your community or town council
- put up posters locally and if you get sufficient interest, you could hold an informal public meeting on the site or nearby
- form a local growing network bringing together landowners and community groups.

When you allow a third party to use your land, it's essential to check that the group/individuals using your land have public liability insurance: you should insist on this in any formal rental agreement. You should also check your own insurance is adequate to cover potential liabilities such as access, or damages to services if the land is rented to a third party.

Negotiating and dealing with a community group may take longer than with an individual whether it is negotiating a lease or selling or transferring land to the group. It is important to factor this in to the timescales. Make sure that one person is the nominated representative and has the authority to deal with you. Make sure you understand how often they meet and how quickly they can make decisions. In the longer term because it is a community group it is likely that more people will benefit than if you are dealing with a sole individual.

Information you may wish to request from a group:

- group constitution or information about the group
- aims and objectives of the community growing project
- funding information or business plan if appropriate.

For more information about renting out your land, the Community Land Advisory Service website has lots of documents to help you; work out what legal agreement is appropriate, enter into a tenancy, deal with the legal aspects of letting your land and insurance.

www.communitylandadvice.org.uk

Allotments issues

If you decide that you would like allotments on your land, but are worried about the complexity of allotments legislation impacting your ability to change the use of that piece of land in the future, you do not need to worry. Allotments legislation provides important regulation to protect food growing spaces but it only relates to sites owned by councils created to meet the demand from their residents. It does not affect privately owned sites or council owned sites earmarked for an alternative future use such as an extension to a cemetery.

Allotments leases are appropriate to use on private sites and council sites and can be issued to groups as well as individuals. They can be created to suit the particular requirements of the land owner and the allotment association. The Community Land Advisory Service Cymru can help both parties to create a mutually beneficial agreement.

www.communitylandadvice.org.uk

Benefits of community food growing

If you are a landowner whose business includes a catering element then having food produced on site or close by can provide fresh, tasty and reasonably priced supplies. A number of companies have set up work place allotments for staff, providing opportunities for gardening at lunchtime and after office hours, which helps improve employee wellbeing.

Land which appears to be underused or abandoned may be more prone to anti-social behaviour and vandalism. Having a community growing project on a piece of land can lead to more respect for a space. Not only will you have more people on site, keeping an eye on things, which is a deterrent for anti-social behaviour, studies have shown that cared for spaces attract less vandalism (for more information see “the broken window theory”).

Enabling community growing on your land may enable investment which would otherwise not be achievable, for example restoring a historic walled garden. A community group may be able to provide the resources and access the funding for investment that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. Major investment usually comes with the requirement that the asset is available for a longer time frame such as 10 or more years.

Larger landowners or landowners with a large workforce may consider having a policy and process in place to direct enquires. Using an existing website is a simple means to direct people to information on what is available or who to contact. Proactively mapping land which is suitable would allow community groups to consider what is available before making an approach to a specific person.

Case study: Hanley Landshare

An allotment site was set up on Lyndon Edwards’ organic dairy farm in Chepstow. The garden had its origins in a chance meeting at an event held back in October 2011. Transition Chepstow had been searching for allotment land in the town and had failed to find any suitable sites. At the event a member of Transition Chepstow was seated next to dairy farmer Lyndon Edwards and the two got into conversation.

Lyndon was able to offer the group a site of 70m x 70m. From the initial contact, it took about four months to negotiate a formal agreement for use of the site.

To keep things simple, the individual plot holders formed themselves into a community group, with a single person to represent the plot holders and be a single point of contact with the farmer.

The core Transition group found other willing plot-holders through word-of-mouth, emailing their members and with help from Monmouthshire County Council. Uptake has been good. The council contacted people on their allotment waiting lists about the site and also kept information at their one-stop-shop in Chepstow.

The farm shop has proved an excellent platform for selling the land-share produce.

Chapter 7: Establishing a New Site: Finding Appropriate Land, Negotiating a Lease License or Agreement with the Landowner

Introduction

There are many reasons why new sites are established. It can take time and energy on behalf of all involved but the results are always worth it. This chapter gives a very brief overview of things to consider; further detailed resources are available through services like the Community Land Advisory Service, Wales (CLAS Cymru)

<http://en.communitylandadvice.org.uk/en/resource/accessing-land-process-community-groups>

There will be people in your local area who have been through the process before who may be willing to share their story. Seek those people out through local volunteer centres, local authority officers and your local elected members (community council, county council, assembly members).

Looking for a site

What type of land to search for?

You should consider the main priorities for your group – accessibility, type of gardening required e.g. allotments, temporary growing space, wildlife garden, play area etc. as this will provide you with some general direction for the size of land you require and other characteristics such as

- location
- orientation
- access
- quality of soil and contamination
- existing land use
- relationship with neighbours
- availability of parking
- water supply/water collection options.

This will give you some search criteria. Different types of community growing will require different types of land and space. Setting up an allotment site will require more land per person than a traditional community garden.

Traditional Allotment plot 250 sq. metres (or ten poles) for one person	250 sq. metre community garden could accommodate 25 people
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Visit other community growing projects; search the internet for case studies. Be open about what type of growing activity would work best for your community.

How can we find suitable land?

- walk around your community to find potential sites
- talk to local people and other community groups, place signs in your local library, post office community centre requesting land for community growing
- use an internet based mapping tool to identify underdeveloped/open land within your search area (Some areas also have their own local sites which map green spaces such as Farm Cardiff)
- search the internet for organisations which offer a brokerage service such as Landshare, or more local schemes such as Dyfi Landshare.

Be flexible and wide ranging at this point. Try to avoid being too restrictive. A piece of land which appears to be inappropriate now may end up being your preferred option. Similarly, a piece which looks the best at first glance could have some problem which you will not be able to overcome without significant time or cost resource.

Consider land at your local school, park, health centre, private sites.

Are there road verges you could plant or existing flower beds you could improve?

Are there existing gardens you could share with another group?

If no land seems to fit your needs, can you change your type of project to meet the potential sources of land available?

Will this still meet your community needs or will you have to agree changes with your community group?

Identify who owns the land

Often you can find out who owns a piece of land by asking around, speaking to your local authority or by doing a search in the property ownership records held on the land registry website.

Once you have identified who owns the land it may still take time to find the right person who is in charge of the land, and knows whether it is available or not. If it is land owned by the local authority then contacting your local ward member, parks, allotments or estates team is a good starting point.

Possible landowners to approach

Local authorities

Contact your local council for details of land holdings they may have available, or discuss whether you can use part of an existing public space, such as the corner of a park. The Local Authority must compile a register of statutory and temporary allotment sites and should give you access to this register. All councils have a Local Development Plan which you can find online, in libraries and council offices. The

Local Development Plan may also tell you if your local authority has policies in place for the use of derelict space. You could also approach the planning officer responsible for your area, who may be able to provide additional information.

Community Asset Transfer involves the transfer of the ownership of land or buildings, from organisations such as local authorities to community groups. Sometimes the transfer may be at a discounted price if there is a benefit to the local community.

A best practise guide³³ is available to help you manage the process of community asset transfer and minimises any associated risks. There are also organisations that provide advice and support to community or voluntary groups³⁴.

Town and community councils

Town and community councils often have land in their ownership and can be easier to approach as local councillors will often live in your community. They also have certain powers, which enable them to acquire land for community benefit. One Voice Wales³⁵ can advise councils on their powers and opportunities.

Private landowners

In urban areas there may be some brownfield, underused, waste ground or derelict sites. The landowner may welcome income and participation on their land from the community if they don't have any immediate plans for the site or while the site is awaiting redevelopment. Areas of land awaiting development are especially apt for 'meanwhile use' i.e. the temporary letting of vacant buildings or land for a socially beneficial purpose until such a time that they can be brought back into commercial use again.

In rural areas, there may be farmers who have land available for community use, especially if they can generate an income from renting land to a group.

Large organisations

These include corporations (e.g. Network Rail), large local businesses or Institutions (National Health Service, Ministry of Defence, Universities). If you see neglected or derelict land belonging to a large organisation, contact them directly. They may be willing to allow community access as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

³³ <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/community-asset-transfer/best-practice-guide/?lang=en>

³⁴ <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/community-asset-transfer/resources/?lang=en>

³⁵ <http://www.onevoicewales.org.uk>

Social housing

You may want to cultivate a piece of land on a social housing estate. Some housing providers have significant amounts of land which don't have houses on them and which the housing provider is often keen to relinquish maintenance responsibilities.

School grounds

An increasing number of schools and colleges are turning over part of their grounds for farming and growing and often this is done successfully in partnership with community organisations.

Making sure your potential site is suitable

Does the site fulfil the original criteria that you set? It is a good idea to review the site with a standard checklist which can be compared to other sites, if you are considering more than one site. In addition to the original criteria other things worth considering are:

- are other groups or organisations interested in the site
- are there planning restrictions in place (e.g. listed buildings, tree preservation orders etc.)?
- are there rights of way or servitudes across the property?
- are there services on site or nearby which are easy to access (e.g. water, power)?
- what was the site previously used for?
- is the land contaminated by a previous use?
- are there plants or habitats that need conserving?
- who are the neighbours are they likely to be supportive of the group?

When considering your future plans for the site it is important to consider the planning system and whether any permission will be required for change of use or structures. Please refer back to Chapter 4 for more details.

Dealing with contaminated land is not always as difficult as you might expect and there are many things that can be done. There are several sources of useful information including 'Guide for Growing on land which may be contaminated'. Your local authority will also be an important source of advice and information. Please refer to Chapter 10 for more details

Support for the community project

Gathering support for the proposal is important for numerous reasons; success of the project, people benefiting from the project, volunteer numbers, negotiating with the landowner or navigating any planning permissions.

Choosing when to engage with neighbours and local community is important. Getting local councillor support is important at early stages. Whether it is a community, town or county councillor they will be a useful source of support and networking to help develop the proposal.

Advertising in local papers is a great way to gather ideas on what people would like in the area, and also increases the amount of people who may want to help establish the site.

Approaching the landowner

Landowners may be more willing to offer land to your group if you can demonstrate that you are able to act on a potential landowner's main needs, aims and concerns. Finding out what these key needs, aims and concerns are will help you when negotiating with the landowner.

It is not enough to simply state the benefits of turning land over to a community-led organisation. You must be able to show that you understand and are able to address the key concerns of the landowner.

Not all landowners have the same needs, so the first step should be to find out from the landowner what their needs and concerns are. Don't forget, this may be the first time they have dealt with a community group.

Some common concerns of landowners are:

- **care of the land:** most landowners will want to be confident that you will take care of the land and anything on it, for example maintaining fences and keeping weeds under control. They will want you to be practical and capable.
- **a nice view:** not everyone appreciates netting, compost bins, polytunnels, carpet mulch and the like. Be prepared to agree to limit the number of structures and the materials used in their construction and siting.
- **happy neighbours:** particularly if the landlord lives locally, they will not want to upset the neighbours, so anticipate any concerns the neighbours might have about noise, parking etc. and show you can address these. If possible meet people to dispel myths and seek letters of support from neighbours.
- **meet their policies / aims / objectives:** some landlords, such as councils, have policies that you will deliver on better than other tenants, e.g. on social inclusion. Find out if your landlord has plans or aims that you can help with.
- **getting their land back when needed:** landlords need to be confident that you will actually leave at the point you have agreed to leave.
- **support for their future development on the site:** landlords will not want your use of their land to decrease the chances of them obtaining planning permission in the future e.g. by generating a lot of public support for keeping the space green. You can agree not to oppose future planning applications.

- **realistic plans and commitment:** show the landowners a sensible business plan and be sure you can carry it out, even after the initial enthusiasm from the group diminishes and in the face of setbacks. Most land owners like to see a positive yes-can-do attitude.
- **paying the rent:** the rental income might be relatively small for the land owner but they will want the rent paid on time with no piling up of arrears. The easiest method is by standing order/direct debit. You should also show that you have a good plan for paying the rent.
- **an easy life:** show you are organised, reliable, resourceful and easy to deal with. Bring references from someone the landowner will respect. Try not to change your minds about your plans. Find one person from the group to be the contact point, who has a nice manner and who is able to communicate with the landowner in the method they prefer such as email or face to face.
- **professionalism:** they need confidence that you will comply with regulations and agreements without any fuss.

The following information will be useful to provide to the landowner when you initially approach them:

- your name
- name of group or organisation and how long you have been established
- type of organisation – constituted or incorporated
- what are the aims and objectives of the project?
- does the project fulfil any of the following?
 - generates social, economic or environmental benefits
 - directly benefits the local people
 - benefits as wide and diverse a range of local people as possible
- what do you intend to do with the land?
- what will happen to the produce?
- what partner organisations does your organisation intend to work with on the site?
- how will you be involving the local community in your project?
- do you have the support of the local ward councillors (provide evidence e.g. a letter or email of support)?
- will your project be working with any of the following groups: Prison service, community payback, ex-offenders, addicts or people recovering from alcohol or substance abuse problems? Any other potential groups who may be perceived by members of the public as being 'high risk'
- provide details of how the project is to be funded including copies of any funding applications that you have made.

The landowner may tell you that the land is not available, if that is the case revisit other sites identified and/or review your initial search criteria and consider if these

need to be changed. If the landowner is positive about the approach for community growing or allotments on the land, then consideration about whether the land is available to buy or to lease is the next step.

Buying land

While the great majority of community groups are better off renting their site from a landowner, buying land (freehold purchase) can be a great solution for a small number of groups in specific circumstances. A community group that owns land is not restricted by a lease and can protect the land for community benefit forever.

Groups who buy land can feel that they belong to the land more than if they were renting it for a set period. With a lease, there are restrictions about what you can and can't do and you have to get the landlord's permission to do certain things. When you own the land you are only restricted by the law.

Many community groups run well on rented land. If your land agreement is long enough and you have permission to do everything you want to do, there may be little benefit in buying land. If your group is informal or temporary, it might not be suited to the responsibilities of buying land.

Below is a brief overview of some of the reasons to buy and some of the challenges that arise with land purchase. It is worth contemplating these as part of your decision-making process.

Reasons to buy

- Long security of land allows for investment of time and energy into longer-term projects. For example, developing an orchard or erecting buildings
- owning land allows people to connect deeply with the land and be 'at home' as a group on the site
- effort and shared responsibility of buying land together increases community strength and capacity
- no rent to pay - in some cases this could work out cheaper for the group in the long term
- allows control of decisions about what the land is used for and by whom
- grant funders usually want long-term land security for grants for buildings and investments on the land
- land value can increase - the group or another good cause can profit from any future sale (depending on constraints of the organisation's rules)
- may be able to raise money to buy land from unique sources e.g. community shares, bank loans, specific grants, neighbours who want the land protected from development. Some of these sources of income might not be available for renting land

- a valuable asset can be a good financial security for an organisation. For example the group could borrow against the value or generate income by renting land.

Reasons not to buy

- money issues. Land is usually expensive compared to the cost of renting it
- it is difficult to find suitable land to buy
- the group must be willing and able, to take responsibility for some long term serious and complicated issues, such as protecting investors' money and undertaking the legal duties of being landowners
- failure by poorly run groups might diminish confidence in other community groups. For example a poorly run share offer might result in tighter regulation for the sector
- some groups are informal and temporary and do not need to buy land
- land needs long-term care and may become neglected if a group weakens over time
- it becomes difficult to move to another site if a group's needs change
- people on low incomes or new members who join after the share offer might not feel as involved as those who contributed to land purchase, even where they are allowed to access the land
- in some cases, people will risk their savings to buy land, for example when buying withdrawable shares
- there are upfront costs to buying land that will not be recouped if a sale falls through, such as surveying

The transfer of freehold ownership from public bodies to community organisations is increasing and the term Community Asset Transfer is commonly used. There is support and information available from various sources including your local authority, [CLAS Cymru](http://www.clas.cymru.org.uk/)³⁶ and [Wales Council for Voluntary Action \(WCVA\)](http://www.wcva.org.uk/)³⁷.

Owning and using the land

Getting the right constitution for the group to own the land is important. Your local volunteer centre is a good first point of call when it comes to constitutions and which ones are best in different situations. Many groups have one body/organisation that buys the land and a second organisation that includes all the users of the land. The second organisation leases the land from the first organisation; this is a good way of ensuring that all community members can benefit from the project no matter what their level of income and wealth.

³⁶ <http://wl.communitylandadvice.org.uk/>

³⁷ <http://www.wcva.org.uk/>

Financing a land purchase

Buying land involves raising finances and there are many ways to do this. Sources of finance are evolving so it is important to investigate all options with support from your local volunteer council, [Wales Council for Voluntary Action](#)³⁸ or other third sector sources of help such as [Wales Co-operative Centre](#)³⁹.

Some of the possible sources of finance:

- share issue
- bank loan/mortgage
- crowd funding
- grant funding

More details on funding are available in Chapter 9

Leasing or other agreement to use the land

Once a site has been identified and an initial meeting held on site with the landlord, community group and people who are keen for the project to go ahead, you can start to think about negotiating terms and a legal agreement.

Negotiating

Planning and preparation are essential before entering into any negotiations. Do your homework before any formal meetings with the landowner or landowner representatives. At the meetings avoid confrontation, conflict and make a considered presentation of your ideas.

It is very useful to engage with elected councillors/politicians etc. particularly for sites owned by the local authority but also with other landowners.

Decide what your group wants in the ideal situation but be aware that with nearly all negotiations each party will need to move slightly from their original starting point. So decide as a group what the fall-back position is and empower your representative to undertake those negotiations (preferably face to face).

Agreeing the basic elements of the deal can take time particularly when the landowner is a large organisation, with various approval processes, and if the group needs to consider the proposals at different stages. Negotiating and getting a written agreement can take time.

Whilst your group is waiting to secure a site there may be other options for supporting other local groups or using other pieces of land for a temporary period.

³⁸ <http://www.wcva.org.uk/>

³⁹ <http://wales.coop/>

The legal agreement

A legal agreement protects both the landowner and the tenant, by setting out their responsibilities and benefits clearly. Both parties can rely in law on the agreement contracted by the other party.

If the group will have exclusive occupation of the land then it will be a lease that is required. There are different types of lease which are suitable for different situations depending on the type of permitted use (e.g. market garden, orchard, community garden). If the group is sharing the land with other users then a licence will be more appropriate.

Types of agreements include:

- farm business tenancies
- business leases
- allotment agreement
- licence agreement
- profit a prendre.

Both leases and licences should have the following basic information included:

- names of landowner (landlord) and site user (tenant)
- name of the site and plan of the site
- length of the occupation of the land (term) – will there be options for the tenant to end the lease early, or to renew the lease for an additional term?
- rent (if any) - how much, when is it payable, will it be reviewed, is there VAT chargeable on top of basic rent?
- use – what is the tenant allowed to do on the land?
- tenants and landlords obligations (e.g. who has to maintain boundaries?)

These basic details are often called 'Heads of Terms' and are used to form the basis of the agreement.

When considering what the group wants from a legal agreement some flexibility may be required. For example, a landowner may be unsure about giving the group a long lease so initially may only wish to grant a shorter term agreement. If the group wishes to obtain grant funding for capital work on the site then the grant funders may need the lease to be a certain length, this should be explained to the landowner.

Some groups succeed by starting small with relatively short term agreements, and financial investment in a site but develop over time into long standing highly successful community assets.

Who can sign a lease or other legal agreement?

Who is authorised to sign legal documents on behalf of your group will depend on the type of organisation you are. Legal documents should only be signed by people authorised to do so by the organisation. If you are a registered company, then documents will usually specify Company Secretary or Chair etc. If you are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), a member of the management committee should sign. If you are an unincorporated charity or organisation, your management committee (or steering group if you haven't yet formed a committee) should decide who will sign the legal documents. Everyone needs to understand legal responsibilities contained within each document, but it is the individual who will be legally responsible (an unincorporated association cannot itself enter into legal agreements; individuals act on behalf of the organisation).

It is common practice for an 'upstanding' member of the local community (e.g. police officer or vicar) who is not a member of the management committee to become a holding trustee and sign documents where assets (land and buildings in particular) are involved.

Professional advice and fees

It is advisable to seek professional advice when entering into a legal agreement. The investment in good legal and professional advice at the start of a project is important. If the lease is longer than three years it will need to state that it is a deed and be drawn up by a solicitor or other legal adviser.

In order to keep costs to a minimum there are a number of templates available for legal professionals to use as a starting point. It is common practice for landowners to require prospective tenants to pay for their legal costs, although these are often waived when the wider benefits of the proposals are explained.

Don't forget to search for skills within your group or local community. Find out what skills are available and can be used for your project. You may not be able to engage the services of a community group member personally, but that person may be able to give you tips on how to approach the project or contact other professionals. Do not expect group members to give their professional time for free just because they have a particular skill set you need. They may be bound by their own professional duties/contracts to not provide such advice.

Good practice can often help to reduce fees or unexpected charges. Always:

- make sure that you give clear instructions to the professional
- reach agreement in writing
- make sure that you have a full set of all relevant records (correspondence, information, plans etc.) to give to your professional.

It is important to consider who will sign any legal agreement and that they understand the responsibility that it involves. The lease should be signed by a legally empowered representative of both the landlord and the tenant. Who is legally empowered to sign will depend on whether the parties are individuals, community groups with a constitution, limited companies etc. and you should seek legal advice to ensure the correct persons sign the agreement.

Organisations such as the WCVA or CLAS Cymru can provide more detailed information on leases and licences; links to other professional advisers and general support.

Other costs which may be accrued

Planning application fees

Please see Chapter 4 on planning applications. It is quite likely that developing a community growing or allotment space will require a planning application and this will incur fees. This should be factored into your budgets.

Registering lease fees

A lease of 7 years or more will require registering at the land registry. It is standard for a tenant to be responsible for registering the lease. If you are using a legal professional this can be included in their services, otherwise it is possible to follow instructions on the land registry website to register the lease directly.

Insurance

Insurance is sometimes viewed as an optional extra or unnecessary expense. Good insurance cover is, in the vast majority of cases, a vital component of taking on a site that both community growing groups and landowners need to consider carefully.

Enquiries into insurance cover should be carried out at the same time as lease negotiations. This will give the necessary time to consider what the likely risks are and whether it will be the landlord or tenant who will need to take out the insurance policy.

What type of cover do we need?

Below are a few examples of incidents and what type of insurance would cover this incident:

Incident:	Type of cover:
Vandals set fire to the compost toilet	Buildings cover
Someone using a public access footpath across the site at night injures themselves on a piece of equipment	Landlord's liability/ Public liability
You have to cancel an event due to bad weather losing deposits on, for example, marquees or entertainment	Event insurance
A visitor on an open day is injured by, for example a falling branch	Public Liability
Equipment is stolen from a shed on-site	Equipment cover
A volunteer injures themselves with a gardening implement	Employers Liability
A customer falls ill after eating produce that was grown in the garden	Products Liability
You give out poor advice on a tree pruning workshop which results in the participants killing their trees	Professional Indemnity

It is particularly important to consider Public Liability Insurance because it covers potentially expensive claims. It will be used to pay any compensation that gets awarded to the claimant, which can include loss of earnings, nursing care, future loss of earnings and damages. This is in addition to your legal costs in defending the claim and the claimants' legal costs incurred if you are found to be at fault.

Do we need insurance?

Here's a checklist to help you decide if you need insurance:

1. you legally need to have the insurance (e.g. employer's liability)
2. the lease might require certain policies to be held
3. the grant funders might require it
4. should an accident happen; the amount of money you would stand to lose will be more than you can afford.

Weigh up the cost of premiums versus potential costs arising from incident.

Chapter 8: A Good Group: Governance, Policies, Roles and Responsibilities, Conflict and Co-operation, Sustaining Volunteers

Introduction

Co-operation is important to the success of community projects. This means having a group of people who understand their roles and are motivated to fulfil them. It involves adopting a way of working which allows space for disagreement and resolution.

In this chapter we will cover what makes a 'good group'; with advice and examples of how to get people working together to create thriving projects.

What does a good group look like?

People feel rewarded and appreciated. There are clear roles, responsibilities and procedures in place. This is reflected on the ground with a well organised and abundant project.

Running a good group is not necessarily that easy, or straightforward. When people passionate about a subject come together confrontations can occur and we will look at how this can be handled later in the chapter.

Having a clear project vision is important. A clear vision means people understand what the overall motivation is and it helps attract people who share the same values.

Example: Culture and values of Vetch community garden:

'To protect and promote the use of green spaces and encourage people to grow and eat healthy food, working together as a whole, bringing the community together which helps individuals become less isolated.'

'An atmosphere of inclusion, promoting community spirit through growing/gardening.'

There are two elements to group activity. The first is **content** and the second is **process**.

Content refers to what is actually being discussed in meetings, the agenda and conversations taking place. Process refers to what is happening underneath, the thoughts, body language and feelings of those present.

Both activities have a bearing on the success of the group. Successful groups always allow enough time for people to express thoughts and feelings about their involvement. They record activities and their impact through feedback from volunteers and project users. This feedback can be used to support funding applications.

What is governance and how important is it?

Governance can be defined as:

“The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, supervision and accountability of an organisation.” (Chris Cornforth Governance Overview, Governance and Participation project, Co-operatives UK, 2004)

Governance is linked to strategy; making sure that systems for day-to day activities are in place. On your project, this could include making sure that there is a system in place for recording financial outgoings and incomings.

In small community growing projects, it is likely that the same people performing governance roles will also be involved in day to day activities. It is important to make sure that committee meetings are not taken up solely with reports on day to day activities. Make sure you leave time for making strategic decisions and maintain perspective on current activities which focus on the overall aims of the project. Governance can be seen firstly as the governing documents which provide the basis for your organisation and secondly, as the business plan or strategy which oversees the long term decision making and the procedures for day to day actions.

Your governing documents need to fit the type of organization you are:

Legal Form	Governing Document
Association	Constitution and or Rules
Partnership	Partnership Agreement or Deed
Trust	Trust Deed
Limited Liability Partnership	Partnership Agreement or Members' Agreement
Limited Company	Articles
Community Interest Company (CIC)	Articles
Society	Constitution and or Rules
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	Constitution

You will need to decide which legal form to adopt. The Co-operative has a useful online tool to help guide you about which legal form will suit your group

www.uk.coop/our-work/select-structure-tool

Legal status

Your legal status is the way your organisation is defined in law, based on the way it is set up and the rules and regulations that govern it. All organisations have some kind of legal status whether they're aware of it or not, if there is an underlying intention to create a legal relationship (even if they do not have a written governing document).

There are two main types of legal structure:

Unincorporated - e.g. Associations, Trusts (including a charitable unincorporated association), Partnerships

Incorporated - e.g. Companies limited by guarantee, Industrial & Provident Societies, Community Interest Companies, Limited Liability Partnerships, and Charitable Incorporated Organisations.

Incorporated – unincorporated: what's the difference?

An incorporated organisation has a legal identity of its own. It's a corporate body that can legally act as a single entity. This means that it can own property, enter into contracts and employ people in its own name.

An unincorporated organisation remains a collection of individuals, and if it wants to own property it must rely on individuals to do so on its behalf. If an unincorporated association closes with outstanding debts, its trustees/committee members will be personally liable for the debts. Some insurance companies offer Trustee Liability Insurance which can enable trustees to claim for any debts which they have to cover.

Incorporation also means the liability of the organisation to third parties is limited to the total amount of the members' guarantees or share capital, depending on the nature of the organisation. This affords protection to those running the organisation and its members in most cases.

Summary of the advantages and disadvantages of incorporation

	Unincorporated	Incorporated
Liability	Individuals may have to meet any outstanding debts personally.	Individual liability is limited to guarantee or unpaid share capital.
Ownership	It is not possible to enter into contracts in an organisation's name and there are difficulties with members' authority to do so.	A corporate body may own property and enter into contracts in its own right.
Risk	Risk can be unequally distributed among members.	Risk is more equal. All members are treated the same unless there is some other agreement in place.
Cost	There are generally no or limited start-up costs.	There will be start-up costs plus annual fees (although a relatively small amount).
Administration	None needed by law (unless a charity).	Ongoing records need to be kept and filed with the appropriate registry.
Privacy	Complete (unless a charity).	Certain details, such as governing body members' addresses are on public

Reference: <http://www.uk.coop/resources/simply-legal>

Laying out your governing document

There are a number of different legal structures and alternatives to a constitution. A constitution is simply the aims and rules that your group will use. It's a statement of what your group is going to do and how it is going to do it. Most constitutions will include the following headings or clauses:

- name of group
- your aims/objectives (both now and in the future)
- powers (deals with the specific functions related to the group such as providing services or activities to further the aims and objectives)

- membership (who can join)
- management (how it will be run)
- finance (for accountability and financial procedures)
- meetings (e.g. management committee, Annual General Meeting, Special/Extraordinary General Meetings etc.)
- rules of procedure at all meetings
- alterations to the constitution
- dissolution (what would happen if the group disbanded)

You may wish to consider the different legal structures using a checklist called 'Simply Legal' (<http://www.uk.coop/resources/simply-legal>) but you are likely to need expert advice and support before making a final decision.

Example: Narberth Community Allotments Constitution (excerpt)

The name of the Organisation is Narberth Allotments.

Aims

The Organisation's aims are:

1. To make allotments available to the inhabitants of Narberth and surrounding areas.
2. To link people who want to grow their own food to space where they can grow it.
3. To encourage environmentally sound and sustainable practices.
4. To increase biodiversity

Powers

In order to carry out the purposes, the Committee has the power to:

1. raise funds, receive grants and donations;
2. buy or sell property and take on leases or tenancy agreements;
3. co-operate with and support other groups with similar purposes;
4. do anything else within the law which is necessary to achieve the purposes.

For further examples of allotment constitutions and rules contact the National Allotment Society <http://www.nsalg.org.uk/>

Defining roles and responsibilities and making sure they function

The essential roles in any committee structure are those of chairperson, secretary and treasurer. These are normally referred to as the 'officers' on the committee.

Here is an explanation of those roles and others you may wish to think about for your project.

Role	Description
Chairperson	Keeps an overall perspective on the governance of the project. Chairs meetings and keeps the group focussed.
Secretary	Takes minutes of the committee meetings, sends out agenda's and reports.
Treasurer	Keeps records of finances & authorises payments
Membership Secretary	Communicates directly with the membership keeping them informed
Publicity	Project promotion, may have design skills
Events	Organises events on the site
Health & Safety	Makes sure these policies & procedures are up to date
Groundskeeper	Reports any site issues to the committee
Inclusion/outreach	Makes sure that people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to be part of the project.

What is the purpose of an Annual General Meeting (AGM)?

- to allow your members to hear reports from the Committee on the achievements and work of your group over the year
- to elect the Committee for the next year
- to make any changes to the constitution

AGM minutes

Organise someone to take minutes of any decisions made at the AGM. It is particularly important to have clear records of the elections and any changes to the constitution

Take down the names and contact details of people attending the meeting so you can contact them afterwards e.g. get people to sign in as they turn up to the AGM

Case Study – Vetch Veg Community Garden (Swansea)

We have around 17 members on the committee, including the posts of chairperson, vice chair, secretary, treasurer. Normally one or two representatives from the Chinese and Bangladeshi community, the health and safety representative, and a member or two from the bee group.

Members of the committee, have a year post. They have to put their names forward to have a seat on the committee. We invite all plot holders to the AGM, we put up posters and spread the word so that everyone knows, it is normally a good time for people to catch up. We always provide refreshments and sometimes cook pizzas.

At committee meetings we have an agenda with the following points normally:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of previous AGM
3. Chair's report
4. Secretary's report
5. Financial report
6. Election of committee



Policies, why have them and what policies should we put in place?

Policies are a set of principles which guide decision-making. Some policies, such as a child protection policy, may be required by grant funders or regulators including the Charity Commission and others state the internal governance of an organisation.

Policy documents

Policy documents allow you to set out and detail good practice for a variety of issues and circumstances. They provide a set of easily definable rules which everyone within your organisation needs to follow and be made aware of.

A balance should be struck between wanting to ensure good practice in as many areas as possible and having the capacity to implement policies. So what are the essential policies you need to have in place? This depends on what kind of site you have, whether you allow visitors, who carries out activities on your site and what kind of activities take place. Below are five policies which would be useful in most cases.

Child and vulnerable persons policy

Designed to actively promote awareness, good practice and sound procedures. This policy aims to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults have the opportunity to develop their physical, emotional and social skills and are respected regardless of their age, ability or sexual orientation.

Volunteer policy

All community growing groups rely on volunteer help, so having a policy which sets out how the group works in the interests of its volunteers and what is expected of volunteers, is a useful document.

Environmental impact policy

Your work will generally focus on community and environmental improvement, but some activities involved (e.g. travel, energy use, procurement of goods and waste generation) have a negative environmental impact. This policy should set out how you would aim to reduce that impact.

Health & safety policy

Useful to make people aware of health and safety issues, their responsibilities and what the group is doing to ensure good health and safety on the site.

Equal opportunities policy

Helps pull together good practice in terms of how your group aims to implement equal opportunities.

<http://www.wcva.org.uk/volunteering/working-with-volunteers/model-policies>

The National Allotment Society has guidance of policies for allotment groups
<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/>

The life cycle of a group

Groups have natural life cycles and being aware of them is reassuring. Psychologist Bruce Tuckman coined the phrase 'Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing' in 1965 to describe this process. He later added a fifth phase – adjourning or mourning. These phases can take different amounts of time and some disruption and conflict can be expected in the Storming phase – as you try to agree common aims and ways of working. The phase that is often the most distressing is the

adjourning phase, when after a period of 'performing' something happens. For example a key group member may leave or a lease comes to an end. All of a sudden your project seems to be in jeopardy and everything is uncertain. Don't lose heart – a good shake up may be just what you need. The group may fall apart completely, but if enough level headed people remain they can rise going through the initial start-up phase again.

Conflict

Conflict can arise for many reasons. Co-operatives UK have produced a set of booklets 'From Conflict to Co-operation' available on their website. Often conflict can be sidestepped with robust policies and procedures as well as effective meetings. Here are some examples;

- A plot holder on an allotment site is not cultivating their plot – or is dumping rubbish or causing a nuisance to other plot holders.

If you include a non-cultivation policy in your tenancy agreement you can refer to it in an official letter from the committee and reclaim the plot if they don't comply within a given time frame. This prevents the situation becoming personal – as it might on a badly managed site.

- One person really dominates the committee – no one else's ideas are taken into account and people feel unappreciated.

If you have defined roles in your committee which change yearly this person shouldn't be able to completely dominate. Also remember the Chair of the group doesn't mean the chair at all meetings. Rotate the chairing of the meetings and make sure everyone gets a turn. Members should all support the chair in running the meeting.

- Meetings drag on for hours and nothing gets done. Members are getting frustrated and not returning.

Have an agenda for each meeting and limit the time spent on each item. Try and keep chatting and socialising after essential business has been dealt with.

- There's a conflict about the direction of the project.

If the aims and objectives of your organisation are laid out clearly in the constitution new members will need to abide by them with any suggestions or alterations discussed openly.

- There's a serious personal clash between members.

This is the most difficult to deal with because emotions will be running high. Consider asking an impartial facilitator or mediator in to help resolve the conflict

Conclusion

For any community group to flourish, its members need to enjoy being involved. There will always be occasions when disagreements happen or problems arise. Groups should be able to maintain an ethos of open communication and mutual respect. Avoid becoming over reliant on one or two people. Most people enjoy being able to help if given the opportunity. Encourage members of the community to be involved and find out what their skills and passions are. If people feel included in decisions, are given a chance to contribute their skills and opportunities to make their own unique contribution then your community group will be a vibrant and happy one.

Chapter 9: Funding and Finance

This chapter will set out key pointers on managing your money, raising funds and generating income.

Introduction

The Small Holding and Allotments Act 1908 placed a duty on local authorities to provide allotments according to demand; it made provision for local authorities to compulsorily purchase land to provide allotments and established the framework for the modern allotments system. Finances for allotments have never been ring fenced so funding to set up and manage local authority allotments have varied enormously. If allotment provision & management has been identified within a local authority corporate plan it is more likely to receive financial and local authority officer support.

The administration and management arrangements of allotment sites vary. Some local authorities manage their own sites, while others lease land to community organisations, community councils or allotment associations who manage the sites on behalf of the local authorities. Many areas also have privately owned allotment sites with no local authority involvement as well as community allotments and gardens.

For many of the local authority allotment sites the annual rental from plot holders is a nominal contribution, while other sites tend to operate a higher rental fee to cover the basic running costs. Set up of new sites and new activities will be funded by a combination of local authority internal budgets, securing funding from external sources & other income generation as described below.

Managing money: a community group perspective

In order to find finances to set up allotments and community gardens, good financial management is essential because it allows your group to:

- plan, monitor and assess the development and sustainability of your project
- ensure that money is being spent wisely and as agreed
- demonstrate to potential funders and supporters that your project is well organised and an attractive proposition
- meet legal responsibilities
- compile accurate reports to funders, supporters and other members of your group
- enables you to make more accurate assessments of your prospects if you want to undertake social enterprises or diversify your income.

First of all find out what financial skills and experience you have in your group. If you need additional support and advice, find out what organisations in your area offer

financial services to community and voluntary groups. Check with your local Council for Voluntary Service ([CVCs](#)), [Wales Cooperative Centre](#), [Business Wales](#), [Institute of Fundraising](#), [Federation of City Farm & Community Gardens](#) and the [National Allotments Society](#). Ask other established allotment associations/community groups how they organise their finances, who independently examines (or audits for larger organisations) their books and who gives them financial guidance and information.

Community bank accounts

If you are an allotment association/community group you will need to have a bank account to deal with the flow of finances. It is good practice and usually a grant requirement that the account has 2 unrelated signatories, plus having a treasurer who is responsible for the organisation's finances. Nearly all high street banks & credit unions have community bank accounts where there are no charges. Each bank will require varying amounts of evidence to ensure you are a legitimate group. When choosing a bank, make sure you have a clear picture of what you require i.e. cheque book, debit card and how straight forward payments are into the account. You may wish to consider whether you think the bank has an ethical stance which fits in with your group's ethical and environmental concerns. If you are able to go into a local branch that is normally a good starting point to establish the information required. Most banks also offer small 'grants' and offer staff time to come and assist with a local project.

Some financial terms

Budget: A budget is a plan which outlines what you will spend your money on and how that spending will be financed.

Profit and loss forecast (also known as Income and Expenditure Budget): A profit and loss account is a summary of business transactions for a given period - normally 12 months. By deducting total expenditure from total income, it shows on the 'bottom line' whether your business made a profit or loss at the end of that period. A profit and loss account is produced primarily for business purposes - to show owners, shareholders or potential investors how the business is performing.

Cash flow forecast: This is a process which enables you to predict peaks and troughs in your cash balance. It identifies the sources and amounts of cash coming into your business and the destinations and amounts of cash going out over a given period. There are normally two columns, listing forecast and actual amounts respectively. It helps you to plan borrowing and tells you how much surplus cash you're likely to have at a given time. Many banks require forecasts before considering a loan. The forecast is usually done for a year or quarter in advance and divided into weeks or months.

Sales forecasts: enable you to manage your business more effectively by predicting number and type of sales and therefore income from sales. A new business would have to make assumptions based on market research and their judgement.

Balance Sheet: This is a snapshot of the finances of your garden on a specific date. It sums up all your income and expenditure. It then gives you your opening balance for the next year.

Audit: an official inspection of an organisation's accounts, typically by an independent body.

Accounts: a record or statement of financial expenditure and receipts relating to a particular period or purpose.

Records: a thing constituting a piece of evidence about the past, especially a document kept in writing or some other permanent form e.g. photos, volunteers sign in sheets, feedback forms etc.

Handling money

It is important to establish basic ground rules about handling money right from the start. This will help the smooth running of the organisation and lead to faster resolution of any disputes.

The group **must** account for **all** money received and spent. This is essential whether you are spending £50 or £50,000 each year. The general underlying principle is always to maintain a fully accountable paper trail for all transactions. Some basic rules are:

- always issue a receipt when money is received
- always obtain a receipt for any money paid out and get people to sign for any money they have received, e.g. parking expenses while on garden business
- always ensure that receipts are written in ink, not pencil - include the date and a signature
- never keep more money than is necessary in the treasurer's home or on the garden premises - make sure your insurance covers you for holding small amounts of cash
- always pay income into the bank as soon as possible - if there's no local branch, many banks have arrangements with post offices
- never pay for anything from cash just received - draw cash from the bank for expenditure (otherwise you'll get into bookkeeping difficulties which lead to mistakes in accounting for what you receive and spend)
- keep as many records and notes of transactions as you can, in one secure place, ideally off site.

Budgets – costing your project

A budget is the best way of setting out your group's plans for the forthcoming year in financial terms. It makes sure you have thought about the costs of what you want to do with your allotment site or community garden, and helps you plan for future activities. Bear in mind that a budget created for a fundraising application may not be the same as your group's annual budget. If you are applying for a specific project (rather than a grant towards your overall work), the funder may ask for a project budget only.

Writing a budget

In order to write a budget, you must have a realistic, clear idea of your group's activities for the year ahead – you may want to hold a meeting to discuss this. The best time to do this is before the start of your group's financial year, so you have time to plan ahead and then prepare the budget.

The process of writing a budget is similar to writing a shopping list with the cost of each item listed. You must then work out where you will get the money to pay for the items. Don't forget that there may be people with budgeting skills in your group and you can also seek outside help if you find budgeting particularly tricky.

Use your budget!

Your budget is a useful tool to keep track of where things are going. At least every quarter, the person responsible for the budget should present a finance report to the group. The statement should show actual income and expenditure, including any unpaid bills etc., and a comparison with the actual budget. Then you will be able to see if you are on track or need a rethink.

If there is a big difference between the finance statement and the budget, that's an indication you will need to adjust your plans. For example, if income is much lower than expected, think about potential savings you could make. If you have a surplus, you could decide to spend the money on other activities.

Remember – only adjust the budget to take into account major differences and always do this at a meeting of your management committee. Also, if you are grant funded, don't carry out any major shifts in your activities until you have contacted the funders and negotiated any changes.

Budgets and fundraising

The budget is also a useful tool to send to funding bodies if you are applying for grants.

In the case of funding for a specific project/activity e.g. repairing pathways or running a kids gardening club, the costs of the project will be included in your annual budget expenditure but the funder may ask for a project budget only. Project funders may ask for your group's overall budget so they know you are financially stable enough to run the budget. It's also evidence that you are organised, have an understanding of your financial commitments and a clear plan of activities.

It is very important to show clearly in your overall budget which costs will be met by a grant for a project and which by general income. Remember that if you receive funding for a specific project, you will be able to use the grant to pay only for the costs of the project itself. You will not be able to use the money for the general costs of your group or for another project. This is also true of a grant for capital equipment.

As with a general budget, don't forget to include those 'hidden expenses', such as expenses, travel, stationery, printing, phone costs etc.

If you do not include all the costs involved in a project in that specific project budget, you could end up trying to subsidise the project from your general budget – not a good idea!

Checking that the grant matches your budget

- ☑ The grant award letter or 'conditions of grant' form from the funder will outline what the money is to be used for.
- ☑ If you have been awarded the full amount, the grant is most likely to pay for the project as described in your application - but always check the details.
- ☑ If the grant is less than you applied for, check what the grant covers. Amend your overall budget at the next meeting, if necessary.
- ☑ If your group is a registered charity, grants for projects or capital equipment will be classed as restricted funding. These may need to be set out separately in your accounts.
- ☑ Many grants will be conditional on your group finding match funding – they will part fund it and you'll need to cover the rest from other sources.

Further information

Directory of Social Change

DSC's publication 'A Practical Guide to Financial Management' gives lots of useful information on procedures for running a community organisation. Tel: 08450 77 77 07

www.dsc.org.uk

Charity Commission for England & Wales

Several useful publications, including:

- Charity reporting and accounting: The essentials (CC15a)
- The essential trustee: What you need to know. (CC3)
- Managing charity assets and resources: an overview for trustees (CC25).

Tel: 0845 300 0218

www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Managing money section on their website, which has many fact sheets.

www.wcva.org.uk/advice-guidance/managing-money

Business in the Community

May be able to match community projects with pro-bono (free support) from accountants, PR, legal advice, designers and building firms

<http://www.bitc.org.uk/wales> and in North Wales <http://www.b2cwales.co.uk/> please contact John Watkin, john@dvsc.co.uk

Raising funds & generating income

It is vital for the future health of your group that you ensure you create varied and diverse ways to generate revenue. Relying on grants or other funding is not viable.

There are three distinct elements to ensuring the financial sustainability of your group:

1. Reducing your need for money in the first place
2. Generating your own income
3. Securing funding from external sources (e.g. charitable trusts, Government, your local council, the lottery, external companies etc.).

Reducing your need for money

Finding enough money tends to preoccupy many community projects, but securing and spending money is only one of the ways in which your group can meet its aims and make an impact on your local community.

Obviously money is essential for some things, but in-kind support (such as free technical advice, committed, skilled volunteers and donations of materials and services) can meet many of your group's needs. In addition, salvaging, re-using, repairing and recycling are all ways to help reduce your need for cash. Simply being more resourceful can often save you money over both the short and longer term.

However, reducing your need for money requires planning, organisational systems and negotiation skills. Consider the following questions:

- ☒ Could you pay less for services or products you regularly use?
- ☒ Do you practice the **5 Rs: Reduce, Re-use, Repair, Recycle** and regularly **Review**?
- ☒ Could you be more resourceful in salvaging or borrowing equipment?
- ☒ Do you pay bank charges and if so do you need to?
- ☒ Do you have clear financial controls that help prevent wasteful expenditure?
- ☒ Insurance – can you get a cheaper quote?
- ☒ Do you attract voluntary help and have good support systems for volunteers?
- ☒ Do you get preferential discounts from your suppliers?
- ☒ Do you encourage and make use of donations of services and resources (donations in-kind)? Can the local authority provide you with compost, compost bins and any other materials?
- ☒ Are there any co-ops or buying consortiums that you can belong to?
- ☒ Can you barter for goods/services or join a Local Exchange Trading Scheme (LETS)?
- ☒ Are your financial systems and maintenance procedures effective?
- ☒ Do you get business rates relief as a charity?
- ☒ Are you involved with local Time Banks?
- ☒ Are there other groups in your area you could join forces with to negotiate reductions for goods and services (e.g. seeds, equipment etc.)?

It may take time and energy to assess all of these elements, but could result in your group making significant savings and reductions in your income needs.

Generating your own income

1. Donations-in-kind
2. Sales of goods
3. Taking part in fundraising activities and events
4. Allotment Rental

Donations-in-kind

These can be roughly separated into three categories:

- goods, e.g. non-monetary items such office equipment, appliances, building supplies, plants, compost etc
- resources, e.g. storage space off-site; use of equipment such as printing, photocopying, horticultural machinery
- services, e.g. pro bono professional services such as planning or legal work, building services, or technical services such as website design or administration.

You will need to put in some organised planning and effort in order to attract donations-in-kind. Ideas include:

- Setting up a **volunteers notice board** (similar to a job centre vacancy board) giving clear instructions on how people can get involved. Advertise for specific skills you need, with details of when you want them and who potential volunteers should contact.
- Producing and distributing a '**wish list**', asking for donations in-kind, e.g. plant cuttings, trees, flower pots, tools, timber, printing a newsletter, volunteers, skills, help with specific events or activities etc. Make it as easy as possible for people to give – be clear about what you want and include contact details, dates, times and location.
- Creating as many **opportunities** as possible for people and organisations **to donate** to your group. If you don't ask and help people to give, you don't get!
- Mentioning the things your group needs in a **press release** and as part of other publicity opportunities. Most local radio stations have a 'community slot' or 'action line' where you could ask for the things you need.
- Contacting your local council for voluntary services for specialist services.
- **Freecycle** or **Freecycle** are two different not for profit web based “giving away & receiving stuff for free” movements. Nearly all regions in Wales have a local group. You create a profile which enables you to view and post your requests. It is not for selling but for getting rid of stuff you no longer want, so one of the rules is no money exchange.

<http://www.ilovefreecycle.org/groups/wales> or <http://www.freecycle.org/group/uk/wales>

Sales of goods & services

These require planning and organisation (e.g. risk assessments) in order to work. Remember that they could all incur costs as well as producing money (e.g. staff time, event fees), so be sure that the activity is a net generator! Ideas include:

Social events: Most community growing spaces are great locations for a whole variety of social events like open garden days, barbecues, harvest suppers, performances, events tied in to calendar dates such as Bonfire Night or Apple Day, picnics and games, barn dances, treasure hunts etc. These can be community celebrations, valuable publicity opportunities, and by having an entrance charge - or other fundraising element - can generate income for your garden. Events can be related to the seasons and can involve an activity of benefit to the garden, such as planting, digging a pond, harvesting etc. Other ways to raise money at events include selling refreshments or surplus produce, raffles and competitions.

Selling: There is some enterprise potential for community food growing, however be mindful that specific skills are required. In particular ensuring a) having time to liaise with customers (individuals and restaurants/businesses), b) having time to process and transport produce to customers, c) having skills to promote and present produce to customers.

You can sell plants, cuttings and produce direct to the public from your site. Alternatively, if you have enough, you could sell vegetables, fruit or processed products (e.g. liquid feed made from comfrey plants or jams made from soft fruits) on a stall at an external event, such as a farmers market. Remember that this may incur costs. FCFCG has a topic sheet available, Growing and Selling Produce <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/beginners-guide-buying-and-selling-produce> which covers the things you need to be aware of and have in place in order to sell produce. You will need to understand Trading Standards law and also environmental health implications. You could also make items to sell such as raised bed kits, compost bay kits and window boxes.

If you are going to be developing enterprises you will most likely find writing a business plan very useful. Although business plans go out of date, they help you stay organised, remain on track and identify how you will aim to meet your financial requirements. You need to develop skills in marketing your goods and services, and at the time of writing Business Wales provides free training around this topic. Additionally marketing support maybe through a relationship/mentorship with a community minded retailer.

Selling surplus in allotments:

Note: There are legal restrictions on sales from allotments, also in Chapter 2, Allotments and the Law

The Allotments Act 1922 s22 (1) states:

The expression " allotment garden " means an allotment not exceeding forty poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family ;

Note that this relates to an allotment garden which is $\frac{1}{4}$ acre and is usually let by a Local Authority. It's the use of the word **mainly** that gives us the freedom to sell the surplus produce as well as the ability to grow a few flowers.

Specific allotment agreements might have further restrictions in them about trading, but this would be on a case by case basis.

Particularly allotments run by Allotment Associations have events/open days which specifically allow plot holders to donate surplus plants & harvest for fundraising. Additionally some allotment associations buy seeds & plugs in bulk and sell directly to the plot holders as a means of raising income for the association.

There may be restrictions on selling produce or other items in your tenancy agreement or lease so it's worth checking this.

Providing practical training: Using, where possible, recycled materials, you could charge a fee for people to attend a training workshop. e.g. 'Come and build a compost unit' or 'Make and plant a hanging basket using herbs'. If you have the necessary skills within your group you could also run craft workshops, such as spinning and weaving.

Education activities: Local schools or other groups may be interested in visiting your garden as an educational activity.

Delivering specialist services: For example, landscaping, building gardens in schools, clearing older people's gardens etc.

Taking part in fundraising activities – 5 things to consider

- ✓ Run fundraising and publicity activities or stalls at external local events such as school fêtes etc.
- ✓ Set up a donation box at your garden in a prominent place with an enticing notice. Make sure it is secure and emptied daily.
- ✓ Set up a group of volunteers and supporters who are willing to give time to run or organise your fundraising activities. You could, for example, decide to hold four seasonal open days over a year to raise money, publicise what you are doing and attract new members and volunteers.
- ✓ Think through a range of fundraising activities and critically consider which are likely to be successful for your group. Organising, running and clearing up

after events takes time and effort; is the event likely to raise enough money to make it worthwhile? Examples of fundraising events include: jumble sales, car boot sales/stalls, raffles, fêtes, carnivals, tombolas, duck races, sunflower growing competitions, vegetable and flower shows. Sponsorship events – climb Snowdon, fence painting, litter picks, some beneficial activity for the community

- ✓ Other local organisations or groups might be willing to co-operate with you in organising and running joint fundraising events.

Allotment rental

- To ensure the sustainability of allotment provision, fees charged for allotment plots should accurately reflect the cost of allotment site maintenance and management.
- The fees charged for the rental of allotments vary widely. Some allotment rentals are higher to cover the costs of water supply, toilet facilities and site maintenance. Individual plots holders will pay their annual rental to either the allotment association who manage the site or directly to the local authority if they are the site managers.
- The Acts state that that rental should be fair and taking into account what others are paying on other sites. There is no specific reference to allotment rentals needing to be increased according to the rate of inflation but some authorities use this as a guide.
- The local authority or allotment association can request deposits. For example in St Helen's a £50 deposit is required with the proviso if someone brings rubbish onto the site then they are responsible for its removal. If a plot holder leaves a plot in an unsatisfactory condition then they will lose their original deposit.
http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/279326/review_of_allotments_january_2011.pdf
- As allotments are normally held by the tenant for several or more years local authorities should consider introducing the option for allotment rents to be paid via direct debit. This could reduce the burden of sending out paper bills and reminders.

Grant funding

The boom in community growing over the last few years has many positives, but it does mean there are increasing numbers of community growing groups seeking support from a rapidly shrinking pool of funding (e.g. local authority funding has reduced significantly due to austerity measures).

There are different grants for different purposes with varying criteria. It is important that anyone looking for grants considers their governance (i.e. the organisational constitution), has a bank account, project objectives and project planning alongside the specific criteria for grant schemes to optimise your eligibility. If you are unsure whether your organisation or activity is eligible for a particular grant, it is always worth phoning the funder to discuss it before you spend valuable time on complex applications. Explain to the funder what you are trying to achieve then they will be able to tell you whether any of their funding streams are appropriate and still open for applications.

To increase your chances of getting funding it's vital you can demonstrate that you are well-managed, organised, of genuine benefit to the local community, able to manage money and offer value for money. Ask yourself why, with so many worthy causes, anyone should give money to your group? Are you using the money you already have wisely and effectively? How can you demonstrate this to potential funders and supporters?

Fundraising can be hard work, time consuming and will have costs. It's important that you set aside the necessary time and resources to do it properly - rushed, inappropriate, inaccurate or poorly thought through applications are rarely successful and could ruin your relationship with a potential long term or regular funder. Remember, more than 90 percent of fundraising is down to careful preparation, planning, relationship building and record-keeping. Contacting the funder before you apply to have a chat about your project and application can be extremely valuable and save you a lot of time.

Only apply for funds to do the things that are included in your group's overall development plan. It can be tempting to apply for money simply because it is there, or because it appears easy to obtain. There is, however, a danger that your group might end up having to do all sorts of things that do not relate to the real reasons the group was formed in the first place.

It's usually much harder to raise regular revenue funding (running costs) than capital funding (e.g. equipment, land and buildings). Your business/action plan should take this into account.

Seek to develop a relationship with existing and potential funding bodies. Keep good records of all aspects of your group's activities, remember to collect evidence of how well your project is progressing and don't be afraid to question and change those things that might not be going so well. Send newsletters or progress reports. Always complete any forms or monitoring that a funder asks you to, within the deadlines they require.

Ensure the information you have on funding organisations is up to date and accurate – funders' themes or focus may change from year to year, or they may close a particular fund.

Preparing your application

All applications should follow the **5 W Rule**:

1. **Who?** Describe your group.
2. **What?** Detail exactly what you want to spend the money on.
3. **When** do you need it? Allow several months for processing your application.
4. **Where?** Describe your local community.
5. **Why?** Explain who will benefit as a result of receiving the grant.

And applications should include the **3 How Steps**:

1. **How** are you going to achieve what you want to do?
2. **How** much will it cost in total?
3. **How** much funding are you requesting?

Most funders will want to see how your project will have social, economic, environmental and health benefits for your community.

Fundraising – points to remember

- you need to know, what exactly is the fundraising for and how much money do you need? When do you need the money, what is your timescale?
- ensure you answer the specific questions on the application form within the word limit
- ensure your budget adds up!
- enclose some relevant support material (but not too much) including where possible good visuals, e.g. photos or drawings, a detailed budget for the project and your last annual report and accounts (if your group is more than a year old)
- always retain a copy of your letters/application forms in case the funder requests further information or clarification, and to enable another member of your group to answer queries if the original writer(s) are unavailable
- be prepared for rejection; an application may be turned down for a variety of reasons. It may be too weak, or miss the funder's specific priorities, or there may simply be no money left in that financial year or round of applications. Try to find out why it was rejected and consider applying for a different project after a year has lapsed.

- if you're successful, in addition to sending a thank you letter, keep funders informed as the project progresses; this will help to strengthen and further develop your relationship with them to potentially secure more funds. Send progress reports and other communications, if appropriate, e.g. annual report, invitations to events, photographs, children's work, publicity material and press releases that mention the funder. Two or three contacts per year is enough; too often and the funder may feel bombarded by you
- be honest. Spend money as agreed and consult the funder if it's necessary to make significant changes to the project they have funded – it can happen! Sometimes a garden may receive money from two sources, each for the same work. Get back in touch with one of the funders, explain and ask if you can spend the money on another specific piece of work; they are unlikely to say no.

Sources of funding

Grant programmes come and go so this document will not identify specific funding pots as it would soon become out of date. However there are a number of grant bodies worth looking at.

External sources of funding fall into the following categories:

Charitable trusts

There are around 4,000 grant making trusts in the United Kingdom (out of 185,000 registered charities). Together, they give millions of pounds each year, but relatively few donate amounts over £5,000. Sources of further information about charitable trusts include:

- 'The Guide to Major Trusts', published by the Directory of Social Change, provides more detailed information. Your local library or Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) may have copies or ask other local organisations
- The Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) Third Sector Funding Portal, the one-stop shop for funding advice and opportunities
<http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding>
- community workers and similar local development workers are often a good source of help and advice
- other local community and voluntary organisations could also provide help. Look at their annual reports to see who has provided them with money and assistance
- FCFCG provides regularly updated information on funding sources through its newsletters, e-bulletins and website.

Lottery funding

www.lotteryfunding.org.uk is a joint website run by all Lottery funders in the UK, including the Big Lottery Funds and Awards For All. The site allows you to search information on current funding programmes across the UK. Lottery seminars are regularly held and are a good source of advice and support.

Public funds

This includes receiving money in the form of grants, service agreements and other forms of contract from a variety of public sources such as: Government departments, county council, town or community councils, health authority or health trust etc.

Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A Section 106 agreement (S106) is a legally binding private contract between a developer (or a number of interested parties) and a Local Planning Authority (LPA) that operates alongside a statutory planning permission.

Section 106 agreements, also known as planning obligations, are legal agreements tied to individual planning permissions and impose local mitigation requirements in order to make a development acceptable in planning terms. This means that a developer should be required by the planning authority to financially contribute to “green infrastructure” (GI). This financial contribution is negotiable based on the viability of the scheme and the land values. Also negotiable, is what the money should contribute to (roads, schools, affordable housing as well as GI) and there is often fierce competition and justification for spending that money on for instance, new school places or homes so people can get afford to get on the property ladder in the local area. Having said this some local authorities are increasingly widening the definition as to what constitutes GI, and this then **provides them with scope to spend money on growing spaces, allotments** as well as wildlife protection areas, and play and sports facilities. The money contributed by the developer can be spent on providing green infrastructure within the new development but also in the wider local geographical area. Quick Guide S106

<http://www.assembly.wales/research%20documents/qg15-007-planning-section%20106%20agreements/qg15-007.pdf>

[Welsh Government Technical Advice Note 16 \(2009\) on Outdoor Recreation and Sport](#) page 20, confirms local authorities can use S106 to provide allotments in combination with composting and natural green spaces.

<http://gov.wales/docs/desh/policy/090206tan16en.pdf>

Local authorities should ensure that they include adequate capital and revenue provision for GI in their own budgets and that approved developments are adequately resourced by effective contributions, either in kind or through ring-fenced financial sums. Sources of revenue funding can include opportunities to generate

income from GI assets through franchising, licensing and entry fees, endowments, community trusts, commercial investment and traditional local authority funding. Alternatively, revenue could include direct income from renewable energy, food production, agricultural grazing, silage or events, or indirect savings from reducing flood risk.

<http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/PDF/Contribute/2013GreenInfrastructureLIPositionStatement.pdf>

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a locally based development tax, introduced by the *Planning Act 2008* that came into force in England and Wales on the 6th April 2010. So far only a small number of local planning authorities in Wales have introduced the levy. Where local authorities have low land values having a CIL would prevent new development in areas in need of regeneration. Local authorities who do not take up CIL are restricted as to what they can spend Section 106 money on.

The UK Government has decided that this tariff-based approach provides the best framework to fund new infrastructure to unlock land for growth. It considers that CIL is fairer, faster and more transparent than the use of planning obligations (i.e. Section 106 agreements). The proceeds of the levy can be used to provide new local and sub-regional infrastructure to support the development of an area in line with a local authority's development plan. The Regulations require that at least 15% of the levy collected is passed to Community Councils where development has taken place. If there is no Community Council, the charging authority will retain the levy receipts but should engage with the relevant communities and agree with them how best to spend the funding.

The CIL is intended to provide infrastructure to support the development of an area rather than S106 to make individual planning applications acceptable in planning terms. Each Authority should produce a charging schedule of what levy will be attached to certain developments. They will also produce a Regulation 123 list of where the money will be spent. Basically money can be spent on what the Local Development Plan sets out are the area's priorities. It is best to speak to your local ward councillor (Elected Member) about where money is scheduled to be spent in your local area. [CIL Quick Guide](#)

The Welsh Government provides a range of grant schemes to deliver their policies and create a fairer, more prosperous Wales. Some programmes are restricted to specific applicants, such as local authorities, businesses or voluntary organisations <http://gov.wales/funding/grants/environment/?lang=en>

The **Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)** provides an opportunity to apply for grant aid for innovative, sustainable, environmental projects, which involve local communities in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

<http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/decisions/2015/jul-sep/environment/cs4038/?lang=en>
Natural Resource Wales (NRW) administers and monitors the grant on behalf of the Welsh Government

At the time of writing the 3 National Parks also have Sustainable Development Funds.

Nights Out is an Arts Council of Wales scheme that helps local organisations to bring professional performances into community buildings & community outdoor spaces at subsidised prices. <http://www.nightout.org.uk/>

European Funding. The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) is part of the Welsh Government and manages the delivery of the EU Structural Funds programmes in Wales. EU investment of nearly £2 billion is available to Wales for 2014-2020, which will support economic growth and jobs through research and innovation, business finance, ICT and Transport connectivity, energy, and helping people into work and training. www.wefo.gov.wales/

Applying for European funding is daunting, however there is support for the third sector. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action can help you make an informed decision about applying. <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/europe>

Philanthropy. The Community Foundation in Wales is a unique charity which promotes and manages philanthropy. Their role is to strengthen communities in Wales by awarding grants to projects that make a sustainable impact on local needs, and to help their clients make the most of their charitable giving. <http://www.cfiw.org.uk/eng/grants>

Supermarkets have grant schemes and or community tokens. Visit websites and local supermarkets to find out more.

Plastic Bag Levy, from retailers that issue single use carrier bags. The Regulations do not specify where the proceeds of the charge should go. However, the Welsh Government expects that the proceeds should be passed on to charities or good causes in Wales, and in particular to environmental projects.

For your organisation/cause to be a recipient of the money generated from the charges it is a matter of approaching your local retailers. Some retailers change their supported organisation/cause every 3months while others will have longer standing relationships.

<http://www.carrierbagchargewales.gov.uk/consumers/proceeds/?lang=en>

Landfill Communities Fund. Project needs to be within 10miles of a landfill. 11% third party funding is required. Generally growing groups would fit under the object D “The provision, maintenance or improvement of a public park or another public amenity” or objective Da “The conservation of a natural habitat or of a species in its

natural habitat". NB: Allotments are NOT eligible as they are seen to be for individual benefit, however community gardens are eligible.

<http://www.entrust.org.uk/landfill-community-fund>

[http://www.entrust.org.uk/assets/uploads/documents/About the LCF leaflet.pdf](http://www.entrust.org.uk/assets/uploads/documents/About_the_LCF_leaflet.pdf)

The **Community Covenant Grant Scheme** delivers financial support to projects at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live. An application for funding can be submitted by any part of the community; this might include volunteer groups, charities, public bodies such as schools, and so on.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-community-covenant-grant-scheme>

Housing Associations. Most housing associations have grants. Some are applicable to community groups in the village or town where the housing association has properties and not necessarily in the actual housing association estate.

Energy Companies and Quarries. If you are in an area where there is energy generation or a quarry it is likely that the company has a grant scheme for community projects, so get in touch with them directly.

Gift Aid

As a registered charity or community amateur sports club (CASC) you can claim back 25p every time an individual donates £1 to your charity. This repayment from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is known as **Gift Aid**. Charities are exempt from tax, so the charity can reclaim the tax that has already been paid on that money.

The current basic rate of Income Tax is 20%, this means that you can claim an extra 25p in Gift Aid for every £1 you are given. This sometimes confuses people straight away - they see 20% and think it should be 20p - but you are reclaiming on the gross gift - £1 in my pocket was £1.25 before I paid 20% tax on it.

For more information go to <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/fundraising/how-to-fundraise/gift-aid>

<https://www.gov.uk/claim-gift-aid/overview>

Companies

Local companies and local branches of national or international companies may be willing to support you. Many larger companies have a Corporate Social Responsibility programme. These are generally seen as a way for companies to do something beyond its normal remit for the good of society.

There are a number of ways in which companies can help, such as:

- sponsoring an event
- donations in-kind (such as a second-hand computer, furniture and tools)
- giving preferential discounts on goods you buy from them
- cash grants
- major companies often have a grant-making arm themselves, often supporting groups local to their branches
- free use of their facilities or access to services and equipment
- loaning a member of staff on short-term secondment to help with a particular project or problem
- paying for advertising in your newsletter or brochure

For an introduction on how to approach and work with businesses see the briefing sheet from the Growing Together initiative

<https://www.growingtogether.community/resources/working-business>

DIG – Digital Income Generation

Increasing numbers of community groups are turning to social media and the internet as a route to secure income. This is a dynamic and rapidly-moving area with potential for those who are comfortable with online technology and social media skills. Examples include:

Using PayPal to create donation buttons on your website: A little complex to set up, but does allow users of your website or blog to donate direct. If you haven't got a website you can also set up a PayPal 'business' account linked to your community email address (you will need to set up internet banking on your community account). This means if you want to run an appeal where you are directly asking for donations from individuals they can make a simple direct donation via *their* PayPal account. There are charges associated with this i.e. 3.4% plus 20p per transaction, unless you are a registered charity which means they charge 1.4%. PayPal have a free phone number so call them to discuss your options.

Using an online fundraising service: Some groups opt to use the power and flexibility of fundraising websites like www.JustGiving.com or <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com> These can be used by people raising money on behalf of your group, e.g. through a sponsored run. However there may be charges for organisations to use other services associated with these sites.

Crowdfunding: This is where you run a marketing and publicity campaign for a particular project and ask many people to donate a little money each. Some crowdfunding schemes offer rewards to people for donating. More information on this increasingly popular form of income generation is available from:

<https://www.growingtogether.community/resources>

The Growing Together initiative has some valuable resources on Digital Income Generation(DIG) and other innovative sources of funding and income creation.

Community renewable energy

There are opportunities for communities to explore the incorporation of renewable energy schemes as part of their project, which over a number of years could then begin to generate an income into the project. Examples include the incorporation of solar voltaic panels or hydro-electric schemes.

Please note that the programmes listed below are available currently (2016) but they will be time limited. The key support streams available are as follows:

1. Resource Efficient Wales - first port of call for basic energy assessments for community buildings and householders, possibly some support for householders too. It's run by local "Account managers" who you can contact and request some resource. They can do initial reports, make recommendations, and often link to other support streams as they become relevant. <http://resourceefficient.gov.wales/?lang=en>
2. Renew Wales - This programme provides coordinators across Wales who engage with groups to write climate change focused action plans that are complementary to delivering each group's core objectives. That's backed up by a network of Mentors who coordinators call on as relevant to help groups deliver on actions - Mentors usually have direct experience of the issue at hand. <http://www.renewwales.org.uk/>
3. "Renewable Energy Support Programme" known as Local Energy / Ynni Lleol. Through this European funded programme technical officer support and some system of grants and loans are available. Run by the Energy Saving Trust <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/wales>

Researching sources of funding online

Some larger trusts and foundations have websites with useful information about the funding they provide, along with advice and guidance about making an application. It is important to read the guidance notes, and carefully complete all sections of any application form, if they have provided one.

You can also visit specialised funding websites such as:

All voluntary services councils have grant search capabilities (sometimes membership is required), the WCVA lists each VSC

<http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search>

www.j4bcommunity.co.uk

www.companygiving.org.uk, tool for researching potential corporate partnerships (subscription service)

www.trustfunding.org.uk (subscription service)

www.grantsonline.org.uk a subscription service for UK funding opportunities for public, private and community based organisations

www.fundraising.co.uk UK's leading Internet fundraising consultancy

www.fundinginformation.org subscription service for sources of funding for all those involved in raising money for not for profit organisations including Local Authorities throughout the UK.

Further information

Directory of Social Change

Useful publications include 'The Complete Fundraising Handbook' by 'The directory of grant making trusts' and 'Voluntary but not amateur'. www.dsc.org.uk/Publications

WCVA

www.wcva.org.uk/funding

www.wcva.org.uk/advice-guidance/finding-and-getting-money

Wales Co-operative Centre

[Wales Co-operative Centre](http://www.walescooperativecentre.org.uk)

Community Share Issues

Community Shares refers to the sale of shares in enterprises serving a community purpose. This type of investment has been used to finance shops, pubs, community buildings, renewable energy initiatives, local food schemes, along with a host of other community based ventures

Community Shares: www.communityshares.org.uk

Cooperatives UK: <http://www.uk.coop/developing-co-ops/community-shares>

Growing Together resources

Include a guide to crowdfunding, community shares and Digital Income Generation. Created as part of FCFCG's Growing Together partnership programme.

<https://www.growingtogether.community/>

Nesta

Innovation charity with information on crowdfunding including the document '*Working the crowd*'.

www.nesta.org.uk/areas_of_work/economic_growth/crowdfunding

LETS - Local Exchange Trading Systems or Schemes

Local community-based mutual aid networks allowing people to exchange all kinds of goods and services with one another, without the need for money.

www.letslinkuk.net

Timebanking

- **TimeBank:** A UK campaign inspiring and connecting people to share and give time: tel: 0845 456 1668 or 020 3111 0700 or visit www.timebank.org.uk
- **Time banking Wales:** www.timebankingwales.org.uk
- **Spice:** www.justaddspice.org

Community renewable energy

Resource Efficient Wales <http://resourceefficient.gov.wales/?lang=en>

Renew Wales - <http://www.renewwales.org.uk/>

Energy Saving Trust <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/wales>

Chapter 10: Design Guide

You may not realise it, but you're already a designer. Every time you make a meal, rearrange your furniture or decorate your living space you're thinking about what works well, based on previous experience. Coming up with a design is like sharing a recipe, it's just a way of communicating your ideas with other people. So with this in mind it's a good idea to make sure you have all the right ingredients to create an allotment or community garden that works well for your group. Inviting neighbours and gardeners to help record what's on the land already and discuss thoughts for the future will make it possible to create a space that works well for everyone. Including as many people as possible in the design process from the outset means that everyone owns it, they've all had their part to play. This involvement leads to the land acting as a focus for the community.

This chapter will cover what you need to think about when coming up with a design and give you tips for how to do it well.

Survey

The key to creating a good design is to take time to observe what's happening on the land already. Ideally you would observe the land for a full year so you can see what happens in each season. You may think you know the land, but it's surprising how much you miss. We often look but don't always see what's there. To record existing features the first step is to create a map of the land. To get a rough idea of where things are, you'll need to create a 'field map'. A field map is a rough sketch of the land drawn when you're outside actually looking at the land. Your field map is used to record everything you see and it's crucial for creating your second map the 'base map'. Your base map is your most important tool; it's an accurate representation of what's there already and allows you to communicate your design ideas to other people, who haven't seen the site.

There are several things to record on your field map. These include boundaries, orientation, slope, sun and wind, access, soil, water and utilities.

Boundaries

All sites have a boundary of some sort. It's important to understand what they are, where they are and how long and wide they are. To do this, ask yourself the following questions;

1. What are the boundaries made from? Are they hedges, wooden fence posts, stone walls or something else?
2. What's their state of repair?
3. Is there water running along them?

Once you've answered these questions, go to the site and use a tape measure or a 'walking measure' to record how long and wide your boundary is, taking note of the measurements on your field map.

Relative location

All land has neighbours, be it farm land, agricultural buildings or people's houses. Where you decide to position your growing area, polytunnel, shed or communal space can have an impact on both you and your neighbours. Where you decide to place things could without forethought create privacy and security issues later on. Also the land you have in mind might already be in use by other people and wildlife, so with this in mind ask yourself the following questions;

1. What structures are already on the land or close to it? Including buildings, earthworks, ponds, historic/sacred sites, and constructed paths/roads.
2. Is there any equipment or are there any tools stored on site?
3. Is the site already being used by other people?
4. What events take place on the site at the moment? These can include events which aren't scheduled!

Orientation

We've all heard the term 'south facing garden', often used by estate agents to promote properties. This is because in the northern hemisphere (where we are) a south facing orientation will receive more sunlight than any other as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. At midsummer the sun is high in the sky – but for much of the year it describes a low arc in the sky. Any hills, trees or buildings between the sun and the garden will cast shade and if your garden has a large building to the south or is on the north side of a hill, the sun won't hit it at all. It's amazing the difference this makes to plant growth and temperature.

To work out the effect orientation will have on your site take a compass and stand on the land making a note of where North and South are on your field map.

Slope

The way the land slopes and its contours (often seen as thin lines on OS maps) will affect how you design it. For example the top of a slope tends to be much dryer than the bottom, which can get boggy. You can take advantage of the slope by moving water using gravity if it's stored at a point higher than where you want to water. Just as water finds its way to the bottom of the slope, so does top soil and loose organic matter. This means that the bottom of slopes can be very fertile and over time the top of the slope can suffer from nutrient loss or erosion.

To work out the contours and slope on your land use a level, an A-frame or a bunyip. A free download about using an A frame or bunyip can be found at 'Rain water harvesting for drylands and beyond' <http://www.harvestingrainwater.com/>. These

tools will help you to work out the difference in height between features. Also, to get a level, a body of water like a lake or pond gives you a handy reference. Make sure to record slope and contours on your field map.

Sun and wind

It's a good idea to try and record where the sun reaches your land during the seasons. You can do this by using a sun compass <http://www.suncompass.info/> or keeping a 'shade diary' where you take pictures of the land at set hourly intervals in spring, summer, autumn and winter. This will give you a clear indication of where the sun falls and which parts of the land are in shade at different times of the year. If part of the land is in shade for the majority of the time, you might want to think about putting your shed or shade loving plants in these areas and leaving the sunny spots for vegetable and fruit production. Shady areas, the bottom of slopes and areas next to hedges can be prone to frost, creating what's known as a 'frost pocket'. It's important to be aware of where these areas are to avoid planting tender crops there.

Wind, like sun will affect how well your crops grow, with almost all annual vegetables being stunted or damaged in windy areas. We'll cover how to protect against wind later on in the chapter, but for the purpose of your field map you'll need to know where the prevailing, or most common wind direction is. You can do this by creating a rudimentary wind sock using a pole pushed into the ground and fixing a plastic bag to it. This will give you a basic indication of where the wind blows across the land. When you've figured out where it is, mark the direction with a big arrow on your field map.

Access

It's important to know where you can access the land and mark these points on your field map. Make a note of the following;

1. What condition the access is in,
2. The direction,
3. The materials which have been used to make the access,
4. How wide the access is,
5. Whether there are any safety issues,
6. Clear routes through the site made by wildlife including people!

Water

Water is a common complaint amongst growers, there's either too much or not enough. Even if you have mains water and no meter its good practice to collect water and it's worth recording the following on your field map;

1. Are there any bodies of water or opportunities to harness it? These may include rivers, streams, ditches, earthworks, wells or boreholes,
2. Are there any roofs where water can be harvested? If so which buildings?

3. Are there any opportunities to store water? This could be using water butts or adding to an existing pond,
4. Are there existing drainage ditches?

Soil

Your soil is one of the most important features of the land. To help you identify what sort of soil you have there are various simple methods you can use including the jar test <https://utah.agclassroom.org/files/uploads/fieldguide1/texture.pdf> as well as using a plant chart

http://www.permaculturenews.org/resources_files/pdc_info/Plants_as_Soil_Indicator_s.pdf, showing which wild plants grow well in your soil type. For the purpose of your field map, take several soil samples from different areas on the land and make a note of the differences in soil texture on your map. These samples will help you to decide where the best soil for growing is and whether a significant amount of organic matter is needed to improve it.

A note on soil contamination

In urban areas (and sometimes rural areas) potential allotment sites may have had previous uses that have contaminated the soil with harmful chemicals. Soil can be contaminated from industrial activity and waste disposal and remain present long after the pollution has occurred.

Gardening activities may increase your exposure to harmful contaminants if they are present in the soil. Chemicals can be absorbed through your skin when handling soil or from eating fruit and vegetables which have absorbed them from contaminated soil as they grow.

It is essential therefore that you check the history of the site with the local authority at an early stage of site selection. The contaminated land officer will have access to historic information which could identify the potential for contamination to be present. This will determine whether or not there is a requirement for soil testing. Your local authority can advise you on what this will involve and who to approach if this is necessary.

If contamination is identified the site may require expensive measures to ensure users are not exposed to harmful contaminants. The process of assessing and remediating contamination can add considerable costs to the development of new allotment sites.

It is advisable therefore to avoid sites where there is a strong likelihood of contamination, for example, where the local authority has identified a former polluting land use has been present at the site.

If it is necessary to import soil material (for example for raised beds) it is essential that the soil is free from contamination and suitable for use. A reputable soil provider should be used and results of soil testing should be sought. Your local authority can provide advice on this.

Grow Your Own Scotland have produced a 'Guide to growing on land which may be contaminated'

<http://www.growyourownsotland.info/wp-content/uploads/images/Guide-for-growing-on-contaminated-land.pdf>

Utilities

At this stage in your survey you will have gathered a variety of useful information about your land. The last thing to look for is whether there are any services above or buried underneath it. These include mains water pipes, electricity lines and phone lines. It's relatively easy to map where the electricity and phone lines are as you can generally see them, (unless they're buried underground) but locating water can be a bit tricky. Contact the utilities companies responsible for maintaining your local water, electricity, gas and telephone infrastructure. If you're renting the land the landowner should know where these utilities are and should have received maps showing where utilities cross the land when they bought it.

It's important to know this information as from time to time utilities will need to be fixed or replaced, which means that access needs to be maintained. If you're planning to plant fruit trees or create an orchard, you shouldn't plant your trees directly underneath power or phone lines. Similarly if your land is located near a housing estate there will probably be water pipes underneath it, which means that you have to be particularly careful if you're planning to fence the area. If you accidentally rupture a water pipe your group will need to pay to get the water back on and deal with disgruntled neighbours!

Creating a base map

So you've created your field map, you've now got all the information you need to create your base map. Your base map is an accurate representation of your land and your most important design tool. It allows you and others to see what's on the land right now. So the first thing you need to do when drawing your base map is to decide how big you'd like it to be.

Deciding scale

The size or scale of your base map will be determined on where you want to display it and the size of paper you have. If you'd like for it to be a prominent feature in your communal space then A2 is a good size, however if you'd like to take it to meetings with you then A3 is more workable. It's also a good idea to make several A4 copies of your base map, which you can use to scribble ideas onto. To work out a suitable scale, take the longest measurement recorded on your field map and divide it into the size of paper you have. A good scale to use if your site is quite small is 1:50. In this scale every 1cm on the map represents 50cm on the ground. Note on OS maps the scale is 1:50,000 so 1 cm on the map equals 50,000cm or 500m.

Remember if you made your measurements in metres on your field map, you must first convert these measurements to centimetres, by multiplying them by 100 then divide by 50 to get the scale ratio, if using the 1:50 scale. When you've decided on a suitable scale use a different coloured pen to annotate your field map with the scale calculations for your base map. It's important at this stage to make sure that your map is orientated so that north points upwards and draw a prominent north arrow.

It's also good practice to draw a ruler on your base map for clarity. Drawing a ruler means you can photocopy your map to a larger or smaller size and still work out distances between features. If for example you were to photocopy your base map created on an A3 piece of paper with a scale 1:50 onto a larger A2 piece of paper the scale wouldn't work, however if you'd drawn a ruler you'd still be able to measure distances between features.

Drawing landmarks

Permaculture Design: A step-by-step guide by Aranya goes into detail about how to draw a base map accurately.

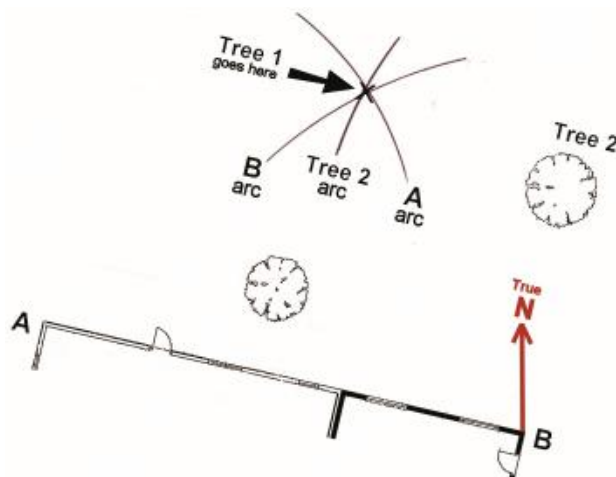


Diagram Taken from Permaculture Design: A step-by-step guide by Aranya ISBN – 13: 978-1856230919

To plot the position of features recorded on your field map you'll need a pair of compasses. You'll need to use your compass to draw arcs from set points or your 'base line'. A base line is the key fixed points on the land and can be buildings, fencing corner posts or big trees.

Firstly you need to identify the scaled-down distance of your first feature (tree 1) from corner A. Open the compasses to that length, anchor the 'point' at A on your map & draw an arc across the approximate location of tree 1. Do the same, for the scaled-down measurement from corner B. If done correctly, the two arcs should cross.

The degree of accuracy is greater if the arcs cross at close to a right angle. If this isn't the case draw another arc in reference to a third known point (tree 2 in the diagram). It would be unlikely for these three arcs to cross in exactly the same place. They will more than likely form a triangle, with the true position being in the middle.

Limit your reference points to the ends of the base line and a third chosen reference. Remember that each new reference point increases the risk of multiple errors. Repeat the same process for all the other site features you've measured.

At this stage photos are a really useful way of checking the position of features you recorded on your field map.

Top tips for drawing your base map

If you find that map drawing isn't your forte there are several ways you can get your hands on a map of the land. You can,

1. Contact Ordnance Survey and pay for a scale map
<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/resources/planning-application-maps.html>,
2. Use online resources such as 'google maps' for an aerial photo. You could then use a digital projector, project the aerial photo onto a wall and trace around it. Note, if you plan to use this method please be aware that some online aerial photos aren't accurate as they're made up of several images 'stitched together',
3. Expand an existing map.

When you've drawn your base map, you now need to show the other things you recorded on your field map, including sun direction, wind, utilities etc. A good way of doing this is to use tracing paper positioned on top of your base map, called 'overlays'. To make the information clear use one overlay for each heading in this section. Don't forget to include a North arrow and a ruler on each overlay, so you can position them accurately on your base map.

Analyse

Now you've got your base map, your next task is to talk to your community, to find out how they would like to use the land. The best way to do this is to call a public meeting and invite anyone who's interested. If people are using the land already, talk to them to see how well the current arrangements are working. You'll need to know what their vision is, what they need from the site and what they'd like. It's important to find out at this stage, if there's anything limiting the site from being used for a community garden or allotment. For example there could be an existing dispute between a landowner and the neighbours or the land might have been earmarked for development by the council. You should also ask your community about whether there are any existing resources available these could include tools, growing spaces, man power or money to help pay for start-up costs.

These points can be summarised into the following seven questions:

1. Who's involved?
2. How well are current arrangements working?
3. What are the potential plot holders or community gardener's wants & needs?
4. What are their values and vision for the site?
5. What are the limiting factors'?
6. What resources are available?
7. What budget do you have available?

So you know what questions to ask, the next step is to know how best to ask them. There are various ways to engage an audience using different facilitation techniques. These include facilitation tools, focused conversation and open space. Brief descriptions of some useful tools are given here, but for more in depth information please refer to the resources section on the Rhizome website

<https://rhizomenetwork.wordpress.com/resources/>

Facilitation tools

To be a good facilitator there are a variety of tools you'll need to allow you to get the answers your group needs and make sure everyone has had their say:

- icebreakers get people to break the ice' and are fun sessions held before the main meeting where people get to know each other
- a go-around, is where people are encouraged to say something about themselves, for example you'd ask them what their name is, where they're from and why they're there
- paired Listening, is where people are put into pairs and encouraged to talk to each other about a particular question, generally one person talks about what they think and the other person listens and writes down their responses
- small Group Working, is where people work together to answer a question, someone is appointed as a scribe and writes down the groups' thoughts
- throwing it back to the group, is where the facilitator asks the group to answer a question that one person may have asked the facilitator
- meeting Minutes, is where an appointed note taker is happy to make notes and circulate after the meeting
- parking Space, is a tool used by the facilitator to 'park' an idea or a comment until the end of the meeting. These comments are written down on a separate piece of paper labelled with a large P to symbolise a car park and are referred back to before the end of the meeting
- the Spectrum Line, is an active discussion tool in which the group physically place themselves on an imagined line depending on their response to questions or scenarios posed by the facilitator. A discussion follows to allow people to say why they're standing in the position that they've chosen.

Focused conversation

This is where you ask participants questions in a particular order. The aim of which is to a) get the facts, b) gauge personal reactions, c) decipher the groups' meaning and values and d) resolve the discussion and lead onto next steps.

World café

This is small group working around a table. Steps include 1) Setting the scene 2) Welcome & Introduction 3) Small Group Rounds 4) Questions 5) Harvest.

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/method.html>

Open space

A conversation that participants, design, run and report on, with a little help from facilitators.

Participants propose a conversation, they then sign up to a conversation, take notes of the conversation and report back at the end of the session. There is one rule in open space sessions called 'The Law of Two Feet'. This means that if you're not learning or contributing to a discussion move onto another one.

Another way to engage people with the land is to ask them about People, Produce and Place. So who will be involved, what they'd like to grow and where they'd like to grow it. Your base map can be used here to help people decide what they'd like and where to put it. Using pictures of features and plasticine models are a great way to get people to think about how the site could look.

Design

Your public meeting is a good place to understand what your local community would like to include on the land and their thoughts on the overall design. There are several things to consider when thinking about the design for the land and talking to potential users. These include the size of the growing areas, structures, whether you'd like to keep animals, how you'd like to grow, and specific spaces for communal activities, toilets, adaptive growing areas, access, security, resources and the layout of paths. If you're considering incorporating these sorts of features into your garden you may need planning permission. Check Chapter 4 for further guidance.

Size of the growing areas

If you're designing an allotment, one of the first things to think about is how large each plot or growing area should be. The original size of a typical 'plot' was 300 square yards which was 10 squares poles in imperial measurements. Today a full size plot is usually around 250 square metres and the standard shape is 25m by 10m. However this size varies greatly depending on the amount of land you have, how experienced the potential plot holders are and how much interest there is.

An example of where a community project has been creative with the amount of land available to them is Cwm Harry in Newtown. Cwm Harry is a successful provider of practical environmental services, developing commercial solutions for sustainable livelihoods, lived locally. Cwm Harry's team have developed a series of 'Micro-allotment plots' for use by their local community. These small growing areas were designed for people with limited growing skills and knowledge. People take on a small plot; learn how to garden with help from Cwm Harry's dedicated staff team and then move onto a full allotment plot on Newtown's allotment site. In practice many people have had their microplot for a number of years as they find the size manageable and like being part of the Cwm Harry community.

There is no limit to the size a community growing area can be. Some projects choose to plant communal fruit trees on their site or dedicate one of the growing plots as a community growing space. How you choose to divide up the space depends on the needs and wants you identify during your public meeting.

Structures

To go about the business of growing, there are a variety of structures that could be needed to make sure seeds turn to fruit and vegetables. These include sheds, greenhouses and compost bays. Sheds come in all shapes and sizes and can be multifunctional in their application for example they could be used for tool storage, for harvesting water and as shelter. They can be made from a variety of materials but your group may decide to dictate how many sheds per plot and what they're made out of. If your land is close to a housing estate it would be worth talking to the home owners about the 'visual impact' that the site will have. If there is objection to having individual sheds or greenhouses a solution could be to have a communal shed or greenhouse.

Case Study

Llanrhaeder Ym Mochnant an allotment site near Oswestry is located at the end of a cul de sac in the village. To reduce visual impact and save space, the site has one large shed which is used to store tools which are shared amongst the plot holders, a polytunnel which is divided between growers wanting to produce tender crops and communal compost bays. Their communal use of structures allows for more growing space and keeps the amount of structures on site to a minimum.

Creating compost is key to improving the quality of your soil and one of the most effective ways of doing this on your land is building a series of composting bays, where large amounts of organic matter can be turned and sorted. A simple and cheap method of creating compost bays is to use three wooden pallets roped together. Garden Organic has also produced a range of guidance materials on composting and the design of composting bays (<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/homemade-compost-bins>)

Livestock

You will find from your public meeting that some people are more interested in keeping livestock than growing vegetables. There are no laws forbidding the keeping of animals on allotment or community growing sites and in the past various forms of livestock including pigs, goats and pigeons were kept. The 1950 Allotments Act specifically allows for the keeping of rabbits and hens (but not cockerels), provided that they are kept in a way which isn't harmful to their health and they aren't a nuisance. However – do check your lease or tenancy agreement to make sure that the keeping of livestock is permitted on your site/plot.

Chickens and bees are beneficial livestock to keep on allotments or community growing sites. Chickens are fantastic gardeners it's part of their nature to scratch for insects and grubs in the soil. This tendency can be put to good use as they can clear areas of land or be put on beds after a crop has been harvested. They will clear crop residues and fertilise the soil with one of the best manures available. It's also common knowledge that bees are good for the garden. A colony of bees on site will increase biodiversity and ensure that all produce and tree blossom is pollinated. Allotments and community growing sites are often ideal places to keep bees due to the amount of different flowering plants grown.

As with all livestock both chickens and bees require maintenance to ensure they stay in good health and earn their keep. In terms of keeping chickens it's important to note that they need protection from predators, a good supply of feed and grit to continue to produce eggs, to be checked twice a day and a well-designed chicken coop. You should also consider DEFRA regulations, animal welfare, storing the feed, rodents, site security and the effect your animals will have on other plot holders.

A free booklet entitled 'The Welfare of Animals on Allotments' is available from the RSPCA – as a download or from the RSPCA Farm Animals Department farm_animals@rspca.org.uk. This booklet has lots of information about keeping chickens and other livestock, making it your first port of call. It's also important to note that the Animal Welfare Act (2006) makes owners and keepers responsible for the welfare needs of their animals. (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/pdfs/ukpga_20060045_en.pdf). The act states five needs; a proper diet, fresh water, somewhere suitable to live, the freedom to express normal behaviour and the treatment of illnesses. The RSPCA's advice on

the Animal Welfare Act can be found at <http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/farm/farmanimals>. Other useful websites include: <http://www.ruleworks.co.uk/Poultry/> and <http://www.backyardchickens.com/>

Similarly with bees there are several things to consider. These include; the number of hives to keep, maintenance and checking for pests and the position of the hives from a safety point of view. The first step to take when thinking about keeping bees is to become part of your local bee keeping association either directly or through the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) the national organisation for beekeepers. Your local association will provide advice, information and bee keeping demonstrations. They'll be able to sell you equipment, bees and insurance. For more information, visit www.bbka.org.uk. Useful advice on keeping bees on allotments can also be found at http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/library/allotment_guidance_v2_1306906558.pdf

An example of an allotment group which keeps livestock communally is Borth Community Gardens in Ceredigion. BCG is an initiative which creates space for local people to grow their own food in a communal setting. Members interested in keeping livestock share responsibility for bees, chickens and ducks using a rota. Sharing responsibility in this way means that the risks and rewards of animal husbandry are shared.

How you would like to grow

In recent years organic gardening has increased in popularity, with more awareness of the harmful effects chemicals have on people and produce. As a result many gardeners have reduced the amount of chemical pesticides and herbicides they use, in favour of growing organically.

If you're planning to use chemicals on the land you'll need to become familiar with legislation and regulations about using and storing chemicals, including the Control of Pesticides Regulations Act (amended) (1997) and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002). To help reduce the amount of chemicals used on the land you could:

- contact [Garden Organic](#) for information about using alternatives
- grow clover on empty plots, to act as a green manure and build fertility
- create a 'Growers code of conduct' where all plot holders are in agreement about chemical use.

Bonfires

In the past, local authorities have received several complaints about bonfires on growing sites. Smoke from bonfires left to smoulder can be carried across an entire site affecting neighbours and other growers. The burning of painted timbers and plastics can also cause soil contamination. Most local authorities now limit bonfires

and apply strict conditions if they're allowed. Depending on what 'Growing Code of Conduct' you come up with you may want to have:

- a total ban on bonfires on allotments
- limited permission for burning diseased plants
- a seasonal constraint on bonfires (for example: permitted between November and March)

There shouldn't be a need for bonfires if skips are provided for disposing of non-compostable wastes. A total ban on bonfires is far easier to police than a selective ban on materials being burned. There is no law against having a bonfire, and no set times during which bonfires can't be lit. Smoke Control Areas only apply to smoke from domestic chimneys. Under the Highways (Amendment) Act 1986 the police can prosecute anyone who allows smoke from a fire which they've lit to drift across a road. The maximum penalty for this is £5,000. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 also prohibits a statutory nuisance being caused by smoke, fumes, gases or odour.

Waste management

Allotments and community gardens generate a lot of organic waste. All vegetable waste is a valuable resource and should be composted, to increase the land's fertility. Empty allotments plots or dedicated bays can be used by local authorities to compost municipal green wastes: this has been tried in Bristol and Bromley, and expanded under Bristol's latest allotment strategy.

Skips should be provided on sites for the removal of glass and metal and are good tool for clearing a site. Care must be taken to make sure that skips aren't a source for hazardous waste like asbestos and garden chemicals. It's good practice to encourage gardeners to bring onto site only what they need for gardening. This attitude will discourage hoarding and get people thinking about how to dispose of their waste.

Water supply

Access to a reliable supply of water is essential for growing. At the moment there isn't a minimum standard of provision required from allotment authorities. Some sites don't have access to mains water and use rain water harvesting from sheds, greenhouses, polytunnels or gravity fed watering systems. Llangattock Area Community Allotment Society (LACAS) based near Crickhowell installed a bore hole to the water table driven by a solar powered pump. The example of LACAS allotments shows that there are viable alternative to mains water. However if there's a drought, access to mains water is good to have as a back-up. Whatever system you choose, all plot holders and community gardeners need easy access to water. With this in mind all water points should be positioned in convenient locations making it easy for elderly or less able gardeners to water.

Living in Wales you may not believe it but water is a scarce, valuable and expensive resource. The cost of water on allotments is often incorporated into the rent, particularly where the supply is metered and the costs are known. It's impractical to charge individual plot holders according to the amount of water they use, so the cost is usually shared. People using more than their fair share can be prevented through the tenancy agreement and the 'Code of Conduct'. It's also a good idea to ban the use of unattended sprinklers and hosepipes, making exceptions for elderly or less able gardeners. All of these restrictions should be written clearly into the Code of Conduct.

Mulching with loose material (such as straw or compost) is an environmentally-friendly way of reducing water loss and bills. Mulching is also a great use for compost and should be encouraged. More information covering water supply issues on allotments is available from the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners' website. The website covers the water needs of different plants, as many novice gardeners tend to water too much or not enough.

<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/growing-advice/gardening-advice/gardening-in-drought/>

Drainage may also be an issue on some sites. There are a variety of ways to divert water away from your growing areas including creating swales (water harvesting ditches built on the contour), digging drainage ditches or installing land drains, which is the more expensive alternative. The Scottish Allotment Guide goes in to detail about land drains and the Permaculture Association has information about [swales](#) on their website.

Fences and hedges

Good fences or hedges around the boundary of the allotment or community garden site are important to protect crops from wind damage and provide security. Well maintained hedges and boundaries are home to beneficial wildlife and increase the overall biodiversity of a site. Hard fencing should be replaced with hedgerows where possible as they are cheaper more effective and environmentally friendly. The Scottish Allotment Design Guide details different fencing options available

www.sags.org.uk/docs/ScotlandAllotmentDesignGuide.pdf

Specific spaces for communal activities

Allotments and community gardens are by definition very social places. The 'clubhouse', 'communal shed' or 'roundhouse' acts as a meeting place where people come together for cups of tea, a chat and to share the fruits of their labour. This communal space is often multifunctional acting as a tool store, a place for selling seeds, equipment and a shelter during bad weather. It can also be used to advertise up and coming community events via a notice board. A communal space on the land is needed for the long-term prosperity of a site and should be positioned somewhere that's easily accessible for less able gardeners. The building itself need not be new

or expensive. In Bromley, Dorset Road allotments (www.dorsetroadallotments.org.uk) have converted a temporary classroom into a clubhouse for community activities. At Cwm Harry's Pen Dinas site in Newtown (www.cwmharry.org.uk) plot holders have built a round house with a cob oven, which is fired up to cook pizzas during communal work days.

Communal activities need not be limited to a meeting place on the land. The rise of the '[Incredible Edible Movement](#)' in Wales has seen produce grown on marginal land including grass verges, roundabouts and car parks. Examples in Wales include [Edible Mach](#) and [Incredible Edible Conwy](#), where teams of growers get together to grow food in unusual public places. Similarly if there are areas on your site which aren't suitable for growing annual vegetables due to their orientation or slope, they could be used to plant fruit trees in a traditional orchard or forest garden setting. Forest gardens are modelled on natural woodlands. They are incredibly diverse systems, based on a multi-storey arrangement of perennial and self-seeding plants providing food and other products including coppiced poles and dye plants. Well-designed forest gardens require minimal maintenance and are very productive. For example [Bangor Forest Garden](#) has planted dozens of different plant species including traditional fruit and vegetables as well as more unusual varieties. BFG encourage biodiversity by creating wild areas, planting native species and replicating natural systems by 'not being too tidy'. [The Agroforestry Research Trust](#) has more information about forest gardening with a comprehensive list of forest gardens to visit across the UK.

Toilets

Many people spend a lot of time on their allotments, which means that toilets are needed, particularly if elderly or less able plot holders have no accessible alternative. If there's a lot of people using the allotment site or community garden then toilets are a must. Connecting a toilet to mains drainage is generally very expensive and time consuming. There is however a cheap and sustainable alternative, known as a composting toilet. A well designed compost toilet will turn a waste product into nutrient rich compost which can then be used as mulch in orchards, in hedges or forest gardens. The composting toilet can also be designed to collect urine. Human urine contains compounds with nitrogen including urea, creatine, ammonia and uric acid, which are very valuable for plant growth. Urine can be used directly on plants if it's diluted 8:1 eight parts water to one part urine, or it can be poured directly onto well-mulched aerated soil, soil covered with 3 inches of woodchip, untreated bark mulch or leaf mould.

There is lots of information about using urine in Carol Steinfeld's book 'Liquid Gold – The Lore and Logic of Using Urine to Grow Plants' and similarly Joseph Jenkins goes into great detail about compost toilets and the best use of 'humanures' in his book 'The Humanure Handbook, a guide to composting human manure'. Using

human waste in this way greatly increases the fertility and overall productivity of land over time as well as decreasing the strain on our over used sewage systems. Not to mention decreasing the amount of energy needed to clean drinking water which we use to flush our waste away.

As with all toilets no one wants to use them if they're dirty or don't have proper hand washing facilities. With this in mind a cleaning and emptying rota will need to be drawn-up and a sink included into the design. A water harvesting system could be rigged up to provide water for this and there are many examples of creative systems people have used. The Allotments Regeneration Initiative has published a fact sheet, 'Affordable toilets for allotments', which includes case studies and contact details for major suppliers, which should be your first port of call. You'll also need to bear in mind security and think about including a lock with a key pad so gardeners don't need their own key to use the toilet.

Adaptive growing areas

Growing produce on an allotment or as part of a community garden appeals to many people including those with more serious health issues. A survey by Brighton and Hove City Council suggested that around eight per cent of plot holders have a disability of some sort. There are many people living with disabilities who could benefit from outdoor activities and the sense of 'belonging' that community gardening brings. The Allotments Regeneration Initiative have published a free downloadable factsheet 'Allotments for All' that examines various ways of improving access to allotment gardening for people with physical and mental disabilities (<https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources>).

The charity THRIVE uses gardening to bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities, ill health, are isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable. THRIVE offer gardening advice, training, education, and consultancy. They have also produced a variety of publications which are available on their website www.thrive.org.uk. Brighton and Hove City Council has also identified a checklist of things to think about when designing an allotment or community garden for people with disabilities:

- accessibility to vehicles (with modifications for special transport)
- flexible layout
- different heights of growing areas including raised beds
- being next to other plot holders
- being close to shelter
- being close to toilets
- accessible paths, tracks and hard areas leading to the growing areas
- making arrangements for people with disabilities to work with existing volunteer gardeners on established plots

- providing advice to council officers
- forming a group for disabled users.

There are many examples of allotment sites and community gardens that have been designed to be more accessible. The Cheam Park site in the London Borough of Sutton has eighteen plots surrounded by a sensory garden, with a sheltered area, seating and toilets. The project was developed by talking to the voluntary sector, the housing department and social services department. The raised beds are very popular with local gardeners with severe back problems. An another example is Gerddi Bro Dyfi Gardens based in Machynlleth

(<http://www.gerddibroddyfigardens.co.uk/>) , which provides a therapeutic community garden for all people in the Bro Ddyfi area, especially those at risk of social exclusion. The garden is open access and located in a beautiful setting.

Horticulture has long been used as a therapy for physical, mental illness and rehabilitation. It allows skills to be learned and used in other aspects of life; it's relaxing, social and improves wellbeing. There are many groups, both large and small, who use horticulture as a therapy. The organisation Thrive is involved with running over 900 specialist projects promoting social, therapeutic gardening and horticulture. It's able to provide information and advice to authorities involved in horticultural therapy and runs a website that offers advice to people who wish to adapt to their disability and continue gardening. (www.carryongardening.org.uk).

Access

To get your gardeners growing, access to allotment sites should be safe, secure and easy for people with disabilities. It's a good idea to promote cycling and walking to get to the site as a way of limiting the amount of cars parked or used. A good way to do this is to provide a bike park near the entrance. Many of your gardeners will live close to the site so won't need access to a car, but there will be times when a car is needed for deliveries or if the gardener is disabled. Adequate car parking helps prevent nuisance or danger from on-road parking as well as damage to verges and vacant plots if cars are parked there. You might like to include a small surfaced parking area, but in many cases a space on hard ground is good enough. The carpark should be as close to the site entrance as possible to minimise the use of haulage ways for motorised access.

To ensure that the site remains a safe, peaceful and beautiful place it's a good idea to include a note about parking in your 'Code of Conduct' which states how the spaces can be used. The Scotland Allotment Design Guide goes into detail about access requirements and how to create adequate paths.

Security

Security is something else to consider in the design. Gardeners often work alone at unsocial hours and may feel vulnerable if lockable gates or fences aren't in place,

especially in urban areas. Lack of security may discourage people from taking on growing spaces or existing gardeners from continuing to grow. There are nevertheless other ways to create safe sites without relying on security fencing. Instead of creating a 'gated community', you could leave the site open during the day and encourage visitors. Openly accessible sites result in gardeners feeling less isolated. Visitors also provide a neighbourhood watch service, which is great if gardeners are taken ill.

However if your site is located in a high crime area it's a good idea to contact your local crime and arson prevention officer as well as talking to other allotments or community gardens in the area to see what measures they have or haven't taken. It's also good practice to give a set of keys to park rangers or community wardens, so they include the site in their regular rounds and have access to keys in case of an emergency. Gardeners should be encouraged to report vandalism to the police and ask for an 'incident number'. The police are more likely to take action if they're made aware of problems affecting the community. For additional advice, see the free downloadable ARI Factsheet Safe sites: tackling vandalism and other offences on allotment sites <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources>.

A number of local authorities and individual societies have established 'Allotment Watch' schemes to help prevent crime and vandalism. Councils can access support for gardeners when working in partnership with the police including shed locks and property marking kits. 'Allotment Watch' schemes rely on volunteers and can lose momentum overtime, which means that they should be reviewed to make sure there are enough people willing to help out. Typical objectives of 'Allotment Watch' include:

- increasing awareness of the need for crime prevention
- explanations on how crime can be prevented
- promoting garden security and other crime reducing measures
- encouraging gardeners to be vigilant and report suspicious activity
- giving an overall improvement to the allotment and giving gardeners a sense of pride
- discouragement of vandalism
- promoting property-marking of tools and machinery to deter theft and enable stolen goods to be returned.

What you choose to do on your site will largely depend on the location and your relationship with the community. In your 'implementation phase' you could create the site without any security gates or fencing. If vandalism and security are a problem they could be installed afterwards. You might find that security measures just aren't needed and save your group both time and money.

Resources

Allotments and community gardens are a positive force in the fight against global warming by reducing the number of miles food has had to travel. With this in mind

when designing your site, you may want to consider sustainable ways of making energy for use in the communal areas. There's a variety of renewable resources available including small scale wind turbines, solar panels and bicycle generators for electricity generation to power low watt appliances. Renewable technologies are improving all the time and are a viable alternative to plugging into the mains.

One site near Dijon in France, has photovoltaic panels on each shed roof; the power generated is used to pump well water into holding tanks. When the tanks are full, excess power is sold to the national grid – which makes money for the allotments. At the innovative Narborough & Littlethorpe allotments site in Leicestershire, small grants have been awarded to fund solar panels, which provide hot water to a small kitchen and the wash hand basin in the disabled toilet. Space heating and lighting for the association's building and workshop is provided by a bio-mass stove burning wood pellets from local coppices and a bio-diesel generator. Other examples include a photovoltaic panel with its own built-in security alarm at the North Park Avenue Allotments Association's site in Leeds and wind turbines on a community meeting space building on allotments in Watford and at Spa Hill allotments in Croydon. (Information from the Allotments Regeneration Initiative)

Layout of paths

The managers of allotments and community gardens should make sure that the main paths are kept clear for access. This includes paths which are next to overgrown plots, so that they can be used for growing when needed. Responsibility for minor paths can lie with the gardeners; however the overall maintenance of paths and access areas should be made clear in the 'Code of Conduct' or tenancy agreement. It's also important to think about how your paths will be constructed. There are a variety of materials to choose from including whindust- aggregate, plastic reinforced, woodchip and grass. The Scottish Allotment Guide 2013 goes into detail about what to consider when building paths and the pros and cons of different building materials.

It's also worth considering where to position garden features which will be used regularly. For example at 'Forest Farm Peace Garden in Ilford Essex the communal shed and polytunnels are in the middle of the site, with all paths and growing spaces radiating out from it. If you were to look at an aerial photo of the garden it would look like a large flower with the communal shed in the middle. This layout is especially helpful for community gardeners working with lots of volunteers. Standing in the middle of the garden allows you to see what everyone is getting up to.

Drawing your design on your base map

Remember your base map? Once you've decided what, where and how to design your allotment or community garden, use your base map to draw up the design, so you can display it in your communal shed or noticeboard. Your design will be really useful for new gardeners to understand how the site works and play a key role when

you start to create the site during the 'implement' phase. Your base map is also useful when you come to evaluate your design, it acts as a visual representation of the land and allows you to think about what's worked well and what could be improved.

Implement

Once you've thought about all the different design features you'd like to include, your next task is to turn your ideas into action. Creating an allotment or a community garden from scratch can seem daunting if you don't have a structure to follow. To turn those ideas into actions, you will need to:

Break down and prioritise tasks

Divide tasks by creating a 'work breakdown', where work is structured into manageable pieces. You'll then need to prioritise tasks focusing on the resources available; the dependencies in place i.e. paths can't be created until the growing areas have been laid out, limiting factors i.e. the things stopping the site from progressing including money, time, people and finally prioritising tasks where a small change has a big impact.

Create a plan

The most important thing about your plan is to keep it simple. Your plan should include the main tasks and a basic timeline. There are several tools you can use to help you create a plan including a 'gantt chart', 'Critical Path Method' (CPM) or 'Programme Evaluation Review Techniques (PERT) diagram.

Manage the project

To manage the creation of the allotment or community garden space, you'll need to build a team of volunteers and paid contractors to complete the work, clarify roles including your own, identify deadlines and make sure you deliver within your budget.

'The Permaculture Design A Step by Step Guide' by Aranya goes into more detail about this process and is a useful design tool.

Maintain & evaluate

Once you've implemented your design ideas, your next task is to create a maintenance plan for the land. Your plan will include completing big tasks when resources and people allow, implementing low maintenance systems first and creating land management systems like pruning or cropping calendars. It is well known that regular attention preserves systems and structures, which is the case with your land. With this in mind, it's good practice to have your base map with the design of the site available in a prominent position and make instructions available for unusual things, like how to create communal compost or what to do with the chickens or bees. Designs which are improved overtime are often more resilient as

they respond to needs as they arise. The design that you've created shouldn't be set in stone, it's organic like your land and should change to meet the needs of the gardeners who use it. This being said, you should review the design every year or so, to make sure that it's still fit for purpose. You could do this as part of an AGM or during a social gathering on the land, just make sure that as many gardeners attend as possible.

Chapter 11: School Grounds

Gardening in the school grounds is a huge subject area and there is a wealth of information on the web. It can feel a bit overwhelming and hard to navigate. In this chapter we'll give you some inspiring ideas and top tips and clear up some Health and Safety issues. You should find enough here to give you the confidence to get started and to inspire further research.

The garden offers learning opportunities for all ages. For the early years there are opportunities for social and sensory development and for improving fine and gross motor skills. In Key Stage 2 you can deliver elements of the curriculum from science to literacy, maths art and music in the garden, whilst also giving the children some much needed time out of the classroom.

At secondary level the garden tends to be seen as something for children who are struggling academically or socially, have behavioural problems or are disruptive. Whilst it's true that the garden can be very therapeutic and prove invaluable for children who aren't thriving in a classroom setting, it's a shame that the rest of the children miss out on something that could be of real benefit to them. It can be harder for secondary schools to fit time for gardening into the packed timetable, but it's well worth starting a lunch time or after school gardening club for children who wouldn't otherwise benefit.

Elements of the curriculum, particularly science, can be delivered in the garden with pleasure and engagement. There are opportunities for enterprise, and for design and build. The messages of sustainability and connection with the natural world are valuable ones, and of course making the school grounds a pleasant place to be with an oasis from the hustle and bustle of the playground and the corridor will be really appreciated and have a tangible effect on wellbeing.

Features in the garden

These features are universal and can be adapted for different spaces and age groups

Water

Water features are an essential. You can divert water from the roof into a water butt with a secure lid and use recycled guttering on fencing to provide endless entertainment moving water around. Watering is an excellent activity to keep small children busy and they love it. Solar water features over half barrels filled with pebbles provide hours of fun and get water into the garden without the worry of a pond. However, a pond will increase wildlife interest in the garden dramatically and can be achieved without compromising safety.

Many local authorities have developed their own guidelines on ponds on school grounds and they should be your first port of call. There is also guidance available from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents on ponds and schools. It includes pond depth, not obscuring the view of the pond from the school, fencing, and clear edges to the pond and a detailed risk assessment at the planning stage, approved by your local authority. You can also buy or improvise removable covering grids.

A solution to consider is a raised pond, which mitigates a lot of risk as the children can't fall in accidentally. This also gives really good access to observe wildlife and makes a lovely feature. You can make it part of a raised bed, seating area or landscaping feature. Make sure you include an exit route for frogs and newts! Also remember that even a tiny shallow pond will attract wildlife. Think twice about getting fish, they will eat baby frogs and newts, and pretty much all pond life! When it comes to populating your pond it's tempting to add a bucket of water from another pond. But part of the magic is that this is unnecessary. Insects, amphibians and even plants will colonise your pond naturally. Plants can take a while to arrive so you might want to buy some from a specialist nursery or local pond. Please make sure you're not importing invasive species which will take over. Find more excellent advice on the Freshwater Habitats Trust website

<http://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/habitats/pond/>

Compost

Composting provides a great opportunity to educate about the cycle of life. It's a great idea to put a Perspex front on your compost bin so children can observe the processes of decomposition and the worms and other detritivores that play a role in it. It's fun to put a sample of compost under the microscope and see all the tiny life in it. Make sure you follow the law of greens and browns for good compost rather than a slimy mess. Greens are high nitrogen items; grass clippings, fruit and veg waste. Browns are high in carbon; dead leaves, shredded cardboard and paper. You want a ratio of 3 parts brown to 1 part green, give it a turn to add oxygen now and then and water it occasionally and you won't go wrong.

Rats are attracted to compost heaps and carry serious pathogens such as such as Weils disease. To avoid attracting them, follow these tips:

- only put uncooked food waste in the compost bin
- use a closed sided bin with a well fitting lid.
- on the ground under your bin, use welded wire mesh with holes smaller than 15mm - Rats will chew through chicken wire.
- rats don't like disturbance and being out in the open – site your bin somewhere well frequented and away from cover such as a wall, long grass or other hidey holes. When you pass the bin give it a bang.

- if you also have a bird feeder make sure you site it over a hard surface and clear up the spilt seed which rats love – or make fat balls for the birds which are less messy

An alternative to the traditional compost pile is a wormery. They are quite expensive to buy but fun to make and very interactive, producing fabulous plant food and small amounts of really rich compost.

Seating

Don't forget to make your garden a place to relax and enjoy as well as to grow, with benches, pergolas and bowers with climbing flowering plants and views of the garden and the sounds of insects buzzing and running water.

Consider installing a story circle or large pergola where you can read on warm days.

Musical gardens

You can incorporate music into the garden with wind chimes and all weather tuned percussion which you can buy or make with bamboo or PVC pipe.

Raised beds

Raised beds are popular for a reason. You can control weeds much more easily in a defined space and you don't have to bend down as far! They can be made out of recycled wood or bought in a kit. If a bed is not being used you can mulch it with cardboard or special landscape fabric so it doesn't get full of weeds.

Biodiversity

There are many books available now on Wildlife Gardening – if you follow these simple tips you'll provide a home for nature and lots of enjoyment for the children.

- Provide water – even a container filled with pebbles will attract all kinds of wildlife that needs access to water – not just pond life but birds and insects and mammals too.
- make a log pile – rotting wood provides a habitat for many insects – who in turn attract birds
- make an insect house – there are many guides available and this is a fun project which will attract solitary bees and other insects which need somewhere to overwinter
- plant a buddleia (butterfly bush). They can be a bit invasive but they are literally covered in butterflies sipping nectar in the summer months
- create a wildflower meadow. Chances are your playing field has never been fertilised or reseeded in which case just stop mowing a section so often and lots

of wildflowers and grasses will pop up. You can interplant with plug plants for interest – or grow wildflower mixes from seed in containers and plant them in.

- compost – it's full of life!
- plant a species rich hedge – it will provide habitat and food for a range of insects, birds and mammals
- feed the birds year round and provide nesting boxes. You can buy inexpensive cameras for them now and observe the nest.

Fruit trees and bushes

Fruit trees require little maintenance and provide fruit year after year. Stick to medium sized root stocks so that you can reach the fruit. You can buy local provenance fruit trees almost everywhere now. These old varieties will be much better suited to your climate and conditions than a cheap supermarket tree grown in Kent or Holland. Prune them regularly and you can even train them to grow along a fence line or wall. They won't be happy in the long term in a pot.

Soft fruit bushes are great value; they also require little maintenance and will fruit for years. Most fruit bushes will be quite happy in large pots or raised beds.

Willow structures

Willow structures and sculptures are relatively easy to build and the willow sticks will root and grow making a beautiful living willow structure. You can do it yourself with a bit of research, or pay someone to come in for the day and help. Common structures are willow domes, and tunnels. You can also very easily make a living willow arch as an entrance to your garden, and a fedge, or living willow fence/hedge to mark the boundary.

Willow for this purpose will be one of several specific varieties - which grow long and straight rather than forked and messy like our common goat willows. It's usually available free from people who have rather too much of it as it grows so quickly – or you can buy it easily online.

You have to make willow structures between winter and early spring, before the sap rises and the willow comes into leaf. At this time of year it will readily root.

Leave at least ten metres between a willow and drains. Willows have notoriously large root systems and are water loving, they will seek out a water source and can cause serious problems with your drains.

Forest gardens

A forest garden is planted on several levels, much as a natural woodland has ground cover plants, bushes and young trees and a canopy of older trees. Every plant in a forest garden is planted for a purpose, whether it is edible, or to be used for building or making natural dyes or burning as fuel. A typical forest garden area might include

wild strawberries and herbs, fruit bushes, fruit and nut trees, and other useful plants like bamboo. The plants are largely perennial. Benefits include less intensive maintenance once mature, a high level of biodiversity, and not regularly disturbing the structure of the soil which compromises soil life and releases carbon.

Forest school

If you're lucky enough to have an area of woodland on your school grounds, or the space to plant one, think about establishing a forest school area and getting a member of staff trained up to deliver regular sessions. Studies have shown that regular long term forest school sessions lead to more co-operative relationships between the children and improved resilience, confidence and wellbeing – with these improvements being long term and being reflected in better behaviour and engagement in the classroom (1: Impacts of Long Term Forest School Programmes on Children's Resilience, Confidence and Wellbeing, Blackwell, Sarah, Sheffield Hallam University, 2014)

Top tips for growing success

- Grow fruit and veg that don't require a lot of care, tomatoes cucumbers and peppers will rarely do well outside for example. So choose a few easy crops such as peas, carrots, potatoes, salad leaves, leeks and broad beans, greens, strawberries and raspberries and get encouraging and tasty results!
- grow in raised beds, you can control the environment more easily and deal with weeds, it also prevents carrot fly
- grow early potatoes, not main crop. You can harvest them in 12 weeks rather than 16 so you get potatoes in the summer term and harvest them before blight becomes a problem
- mulch! It keeps down weeds and maintains moisture in the soil. If a bed is unused cover it, so you don't have to clear it again
- look after the soil, decent soil provides nutrients and structure for healthy plants so every year add some soil improver or compost
- rotate! If you grow the same crop in the same soil year after year it starts to do badly and get more diseases and viruses like blight and clubroot. Have a four bed rotation system for brassicas, potatoes, legumes and everything else
- grow edible flowers, like calendula and nasturtium, they're really fun, easy and colourful.

Activities which support the curriculum

There are lots of activities that can be related to the curriculum and enhance learning, practical activities really make knowledge stick! Here are some ideas for you to try and research further.

- weather stations – you can measure rainfall, temperature and wind direction all with improvised recycled equipment **Science, maths, geography, design and technology**
- planning the growing season – children can do their own research on what vegetables and fruits will grow well, when to plant seeds, pot on, plant outside, how to care for them and when to harvest. They can also measure the available space, and work out how many plants you need which involves a lot of measuring, research, and calculation. **Maths, literacy**
- soil testing – you can test the composition of your soil with a jar and some water. Shake it up and leave to settle into its constituent parts to find out whether your soil is predominantly clay, sandy, or a perfect loam. You can also test the PH of your soil with litmus paper. Research what effect this will have on plant growth and why. Explore further into what habitats you have locally, how they are classified, and what native plants grow in your area – and how this differs in different conditions. **Science, geography**
- garden design – this is great for maths. Have a look at the garden design chapter for an in depth guide to creating a site plan and designing a layout. It doesn't matter if your garden is already in place – you can design fantasy gardens applying mathematical skills to draw to scale. **Maths, art**
- cook and eat – design a menu using produce from the garden. Explore the idea of local food and research the processes and environmental costs of bringing food from around the world. Cook something together that uses garden produce **Art, literacy, geography, PSE**
- make a poster about composting **Art, science**
- pick a flower, identify the parts and draw them. Explore sexual and asexual reproduction and the distribution of seeds. Play a game where children hide acorns all over the playground and then have to remember where they are the next day to illustrate how squirrels and jays spread oak trees. **Science**
- sell your produce at a school fair to encourage entrepreneurship and practise maths. Most of the laws concerning food labelling and selling only apply to food businesses. So it's fine to sell your produce and prepared foods such as cakes, jams and chutneys at a school fair to raise funds for the garden or PTA. Just follow common sense hygiene rules. You can find more information on the Food Standards Agency website.
- decorate recycled plastic containers and plant them up with bulbs to sell at school events or as a Christmas activity. **Art**

- explore photosynthesis and relate it to solar panels and explore how the sun affects life on earth and the carbon cycle. Cover some leaves in the garden with aluminium foil and see what has happened when you uncover them in a week.

Science

Setting up the garden

If your school doesn't have a garden at all, here are some tips for getting started

- design your space before you start – have a look at the Design chapter to help you. Involve the children in the process.
- put the word out through the PTA that you're looking for donations in terms of materials but make sure you have a list of what you want so you don't end up with things you can't use
- ask local businesses to donate money, materials, or manpower – get the children to write the letters
- your local authority may have large quantities of soil improver made from composting household green and food waste. This is really rich and excellent for filling raised beds.
- organise some work days to do the building involving parents
- ask the PTA to donate some money to the project and to consider running a special event to raise funds
- contact local charities such as the Wildlife Trust or Groundwork who may be able to help or give you good advice
- whether you are a teacher or a parent – if there isn't a history of gardening in the school and there is limited interest try and let as many people as possible know and set up a group using social media so that people have an opportunity to get involved
- link up with your local horticultural societies, allotment groups and WI – they may well have lots of spare tools, plants and expertise they'd be willing to share
- external funding for school gardens is limited. This is because gardens are for the benefit of the school only – rather than the whole community. Setting up a garden needn't be expensive and fundraising income and donations from parents, businesses and local people are usually enough to get growing.

The concrete yard or tiny space

This is a common problem in smaller schools; there just isn't any green space. Ideas to transform your concrete yard into a vibrant garden full of wildlife, that fall short of digging it up, include:

- raised beds – if you make them deep enough they will be fine on tarmac or concrete. Try and build them at least a metre deep so they don't dry out and have a chance to develop a bit of soil structure. Every year add as much soil improver as you can – removing some tired old soil if necessary.
- structures – you can create interest in the garden by building wooden structures such as seating areas and pergolas with beds for climbing flowering plants. They can be anchored into the concrete/tarmac. Again make sure the beds are deep and generously sized
- try and avoid small pots and containers – they just dry out and look messy and the plants in them get root bound and die.
- vertical growing. There are some fabulous ideas on the internet for using vertical space by recycling pallets or building chicken wire towers – you can grow a lot of veg and herbs this way! You can also use the school fence and south facing walls to grow climbing plants like peas, sweet peas, beans, honeysuckle, jasmine and nasturtiums for interest and colour. Or you can attach window boxes and hayracks to the walls to grow strawberries or flowers – but these will require a lot of watering.
- use art and sculpture to brighten up the playground – paint a human sun dial onto the concrete, and paint murals or create mosaics on the walls.
- install a green roof on your shed or outbuilding
- make a gravel garden with succulents and sedums – with a solar powered water feature
- build a raised pond
- put down woodchip paths on top of the tarmac between the raised beds to soften the effect
- have a bird feeding station and birdbath

Growing around the school year

It can be a real problem that during the height of the growing season there's no-one at school to look after the garden or harvest the fruit and vegetables. You can get around this in several ways. Grow easy fruit and veg that is ready to harvest in the

school term time, and try and recruit an enthusiastic local person or horticultural society to water the garden over the summer. They can also pick some crops as if you leave them on the plants they will stop producing and in September you'll have enormous marrows instead of courgettes and stringy old beans. When growing potatoes use 'earlies' rather than main crop varieties. They can be harvested in 12 weeks rather than 16 so you get potatoes in term time and they crop before blight (a disease that rots the leaves and ruins your crop) becomes a problem in the summer. The following table should give you an idea of when to plant different varieties to have a crop in term time. This chart only includes easy to grow vegetables that don't need to be grown under cover or take a lot of looking after.

Apples will be ready in the autumn term – depending on variety – they're ready to pick when a gentle twist drops the apple in your hand. Plant early fruiting varieties of Strawberry like Mae, Honeoye or Elsanta, to get some fruit in term time. Also plant some wild or alpine strawberries, they spread like mad; require no care and the children can graze on the tiny jewel like berries. You can use them as ground cover around your herbs and soft fruit. Raspberries come in two sorts, summer and autumn fruiting. Plant some of each and you'll get a delicious crop in summer and autumn terms, but plant them separately because they require different pruning and it's easy to forget which is which! Other soft fruit will start to be ready at the end of the summer term but will mostly be eaten by the birds over the holidays unless you are in a particularly sunny spot where it ripens early or have a friendly neighbour who will pick and freeze it for you.

Almost all crops apart from root crops can be given a head start by planting in pots in a greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill a month early. Plant out when the soil starts to warm up which is different every year, and before the seedlings get too leggy and root bound. You can also appeal for plants left over from local church and community plant sales, and most gardeners get overexcited when sowing seeds in the spring and will have left over seedlings they're happy to donate if you ask around.

Growing Timetable

Key: O – Sow outside I – Sow inside P – plant outside H - Harvest

	Month											
Crop	Se	Oc	No	De	Ja	Fe	Ma	Ap	May	Jun	Jul	Au
Broad Bean	H				I	I/O	O			H	H	H
French Climbing Bean	H	H					I	I/O	O	O/H	O/H	H
Runner bean	H	H							O			H
Beetroot	H	H					O	O	O	O/H	O/H	H
Purple sprouting broccoli					H	H	H	I/H	I/P/H	I/P	P	
Calendula	H	H					O	O	O	O	H	H
Carrot	H	H				O	O	O	O	O/H	H	H
Courgette	H						I	I	P	H	H	H
Leek	H	H	H	H	I/H	O/H	O/H	P/H				
Lettuce	H	H	H	H	I/H	I/H	O/H	O/H	O/H	O/H	H	H
Nasturtium	H					I	I	O	O	O/H	H	H
Onion	H				I	O	O	P		H	H	H
Spring Onion	H	H					O	O	O/H	O/H	O/H	H
Peas	H				I	I	O	O/P	O/P	H	H	H
Potatoes - early						O	O		H	H	H	
Pumpkin/squash	H	H					I	I	P	P		H
Spinach	H	H	H	H	H	H	O/H	O/H	O/H	O/H	O/H	H

Swede	H	H	H						O	O		
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Chickens

Many schools have the space and capacity to keep chickens and the benefits of interacting with animals and having responsibility for their welfare are well worth the effort. Every child is delighted by the discovery of a warm egg! If you buy/build a secure and sturdy run you should be able to keep them safe from all but the most audacious fox. It's often possible to team up with a local chicken keeper who will take your flock for the holidays and check on them at weekends in return for eggs! You don't need to register your flock unless you have more than 50 chickens.

Chicken keeping manuals abound so you won't find the detail here, but the main things that may concern you are the Health and Safety issues.

The inevitable food spillages can make chicken runs attractive to rats. Try not to overfeed so there isn't grain lying around and make sure there isn't a nice covert nesting place near the chicken run or under the coop.

When you fetch the eggs don't be tempted to wash them, they have a natural protective coating that prevents bacteria from entering the permeable shell.

Salmonella is a bacteria which is more common in large hatcheries and if you buy your chickens from a reputable small producer you shouldn't have a problem with it. It's carried in chicken faeces if a bird is infected. As a matter of course children should wash their hands after any contact with the chickens. Alcohol hand gels are not an effective substitute for handwashing. Always cook the eggs thoroughly.

Other chicken diseases and parasites are generally not transmittable to humans.

You can sell eggs 'at the gate' to staff, parents and passers by. You only need to register and correctly stamp/label your eggs if selling them for resale (e.g. to a cafe, shop or bakery, etc.)



Health and safety

You should of course write a risk assessment for your garden and review it regularly to make sure it's fit for purpose. Here's a sample risk assessment that covers the basics, but do write your own, so that you think through the different hazards in your own situation and consider them properly as you write the assessment. You should also make your local authority aware if you are keeping chickens or have a pond.

General Gardening Risk Assessment			
Hazard	Risk	Who is at Risk	Controls
Soil/compost/animal faeces	Soil borne pathogens; leptospirosis(Weils disease), tetanus, toxoplasmosis etc. Skin irritation Blowing into eyes	Children, staff and volunteers	Provide gloves. Wash hands with warm water and soap. Inform parents about tetanus immunisation. Up to date first aid kit with eye wash. Don't store compost in the greenhouse as heat increases risk of Legionella. Dampen compost before using or turning.
Water butts and hoses	Water borne bacteria and pathogens. Legionella, Weils disease. Tripping.	Children, staff and volunteers	Make sure children understand not to drink stored water. Avoid using stored water in a mister or sprinkler. Wash hands after gardening. Store hoses empty and coiled.
Plant supports	Injury to eyes	Children, staff and volunteers	If using plant supports lower than head height use cane toppers.
Poisonous plants, stinging plants	Rashes, blindness, poisoning	Children, staff and volunteers	Find list of poisonous native plants and check there are none pre-existing. Know what you're planting. Keep stinging plants like nettles (kept as caterpillar food plants and for pollinators) in a separate place.
Insects	Stings – anaphylactic shock	Children, staff and volunteers	You should know anyway if any child or staff member is allergic to wasp or bee stings and have appropriate measures in place. Adult volunteers can assess their own risk.
Weather	Sunburn, getting very cold or wet	Children, staff and volunteers	Use the same measures as you do for play time. Children can bring

			suncream in to school. Some schools provide wellies and outdoor coats for forest school/gardening sessions.
Litter in compost – glass or metal	Cuts, tetanus	Children, staff and volunteers	If using municipal waste compost look through it before allowing the children to handle it. Provide gloves.
Uneven ground, obstacles	Slips, trips and falls - Cuts, grazes, breaks and sprains.	Children, staff and volunteers	Try to keep paths clear and level. Avoid leaving tools and equipment lying around. Build steps on steep slopes.

Pond Risk Assessment			
Hazard	Risk	Who is at risk	Controls
Deep water	Drowning, water borne pathogens	Children, staff, volunteers, trespassers	Install metal grid. Build a raised pond. Have the pond securely fenced off with warning signs. Wash hands after pond dipping.
Shallow water	Drowning, water borne pathogens	Children, staff, volunteers, trespassers	Use of pebbles to make sure water doesn't form a pool. Install metal grid. Build a raised pond. Wash hands after contact with water

Enterprise

Enterprising ideas for the school garden can include selling produce, plants and eggs. Pupils can learn about budgeting, pricing and marketing and you can also raise some much needed funds for the garden. Labels can be designed and produced either by hand or on the computer. They'll also learn the economics of enterprise – what is the mark up on different items and how much profit will they make? What do the materials cost and can you get any for free – recycled plant pots

and home produced compost for example. You can set up a sales table in the school foyer, sell at events such as the summer fair and Christmas party, or even in local shops. Ideas for things to sell include:

- eggs (if you sell through a third party you need to register and label your eggs)
- fruit and veg – although you may prefer to eat this! You don't raise a lot of money through selling small amounts of fruit and veg and the children will enjoy eating what they've grown
- plug plants grown from seed – these are cheap to produce with a high mark up. You will need protected growing space like a polytunnel and they will need watering at weekends – you can set up an automated watering system with a timer or make DIY drip waterers with recycled bottles
- planters – hanging baskets planted with plants you've grown yourselves or with plug plants bought in bulk will have a high mark up
- bulb planters planted in the autumn for spring colour if you have the space to store them
- value added products such as jam or courgette cake – its fine to sell these directly.

Enterprise can deliver across literacy, numeracy and technology. It's also helps to develop "enterprising creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work" (Successful Futures: Independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, Dr Graham Donaldson Feb.2015)

Growing under cover

PROS:

- extend the growing season
- you can plant tender crops like tomatoes
- you can raise lots of seedlings to plant or sell
- you have an indoor space to work in bad weather.

CONS:

- they're expensive
- they require maintenance - polytunnel covers will need replacing – probably after five years or so
- the plants in a greenhouse/polytunnel will require much more care than plants grown outside
- they will need watering and ventilating on weekends and during the holidays.

If you decide that the benefits outweigh the difficulties you might want to consider installing an automated watering system. The easiest way is to fit a timer to an

outside tap which feeds either a drip irrigation system or sprinkler. You can also experiment with collected water from the roof which trickle feeds into the greenhouse utilising the pressure from a raised tank – the research, design and implementation would be a fantastic themed project around water resources!

If you are going to install water collection on your glasshouse or polytunnel it's much easier to do it when you first build it than to retrofit. The stick on gutters on polytunnels just don't really work and you're much better off installing real guttering when you put on the cover. This is also a good time to install net sides which will mean that the polytunnel will have adequate ventilation without someone needing to be there to open the doors. For a greenhouse you can install heat sensitive automatic windows.

If you're offered a second hand glass greenhouse think about replacing the glass panels with polycarbonate. Greenhouse glass is very fragile and dangerous.

If you haven't got the funds for a new polytunnel but would love to have one you can find plans online to build your own with plumbing pipe.

What makes for a successful school garden?

Some schools have thriving vibrant gardens which the children and staff enjoy and at some schools it seems to be an uphill struggle with limited benefits. What makes a school garden work well?

Staff involvement is key: if the head teacher is keen then the garden has a much better chance of success. If they don't really see the point then the garden will be marginalised and the children will miss out on much of the potential benefit. If all the work is left up to one staff member or parent, the garden won't thrive; everyone needs to be on board! You don't have to be a keen gardener or even know what you're doing to be part of the garden. You can support it by encouraging staff to use it as a resource for lessons and by encouraging and supporting keen staff, parents and children. Why not arrange a visit to a successful school garden for staff and parents to inspire them?

Make the garden available: if the garden is a few veg beds behind a fence and no-one's allowed in unsupervised then it won't feel part of the school. Design a garden that is part of the grounds, accessible and beautiful with places to sit and crafts and art and water as well as veg. Make sure that all the staff know they can use the garden and what they can do there.

Don't just use it for growing: check out some of the activities suggested here and do some research online, the garden is a fantastic resource for every area of the curriculum, it's not all about veg!

Someone has to take responsibility: a garden needs to be cared for and nurtured and that takes a bit of organisation. Whether it's a keen staff member and/or a group of committed parents, someone has to co-ordinate.

What is not important is having an expert gardener. Gardens are very forgiving and you really can learn as you go!

Case study: Ysgol San Sior Llandudno

Each week a different class has what is known by the children as 'Wythnos leir' and the teachers adapt their planning to ensure literacy/numeracy skills are integrated in their lesson plans, where the work involves chickens. Simultaneously we have what is known as 'Wythnos Amgylchedd' (Environment Week) where the teachers ensure literacy/numeracy skills are integrated into activities that involve either the school's grounds or the school's extensive menagerie.

During cookery projects we use our own eggs, our own apples from the school's orchard and fresh vegetables from our vegetable plots.

Several schools from across the county and further afield have visited the school to see our project. We now offer workshops where the children give presentations showing off our school creatures.

Children know where their food comes from and run a successful profitable business supplying eggs to the local community. The funds generated to date, have been reinvested into the business. Eventually the school's Eco Council will decide how the funds should be spent. Children get to use the outdoors and benefit emotionally and intellectually from being outside. The children are involved at every stage from cleaning, feeding to egg collection.

It is important to remember that success in recycling led to the project. In 2012 the school was spending £1200 on emptying two 1100litre bins. Now the school has just one 240 litre bin that is emptied weekly. The savings made were reinvested into chickens!

We use 'Apprentice' style challenges to inspire and promote entrepreneurial skills and develop each child's creativity thus ensuring each child reaches their full potential, to be fully literate and to be able to participate in a bilingual society. How do we do this?

We provide a stimulating and challenging curriculum, empowering children to think for themselves and to exceed their expectations; realising the limitations of the classroom as a learning environment and the opportunities that the wider environment holds.

Chapter 12: Encouraging Biodiversity

Introduction

Biodiversity is the variety of life, from a song thrush in an orchard to ancient woodland. Wildlife and nature provides us with the essentials for life: oxygen, water, food, timber, cloth and it inspires us.

Allotments and gardens are a habitat where many people come into direct contact with wildlife and appreciate its diversity. All gardens and allotments have the potential to be informal nature reserves, as they provide a diversity of micro-habitats. While allotment gardens are typically used for growing crops, flowers or as a place for recreation, they can also include other habitats (meadow, woodland, heathland and ponds) and support a number of nationally declining species such as song thrush, pipistrelle bats, hedgehogs, frogs and toads.

With this in mind, if your group is considering creating allotments or a community garden on a new site the biodiversity and ecological interest of the site should be considered. It is important to think about the impact that cultivating the land will have on existing ecological features and contemplate whether it's possible to retain some of these features or design spaces to include them.

There are many ways to enhance your allotment for biodiversity. This chapter will cover some of these and direct you to sources for further information.

Hedges and edges

Hedgerows are frequently full of wild flowers and are often ancient boundaries. A single hedge can support up to 2000 species, supporting a complex ecological food web. Hedges create wildlife corridors through the landscape linking woodlands and habitats. Growing a hedge around the entire site is a great way to increase the number of species supported by your project and encourage beneficial wildlife onto your land.

Hedges not only create significant habitat on site, but help support 'priority species', of which hedges have 135. Priority habitats and species are listed in the UK Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework. In Wales, they are recognised as Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) including toad, linnet, hedgehog, bullfinch, arable weeds and moths.

When planting a hedge it is best to use native shrub species including hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and wild privet. To ensure your hedge is providing the best possible habitat and increase biodiversity you should:

1. Keep it thick and dense.
2. Cut at the right time preferably in late winter.

3. Don't cut too often or too tight and consider traditional hedge laying.
4. Encourage native shrubs. Flowering bushes such as hawthorn, blackthorn, sallow and honeysuckle provide important nectar and pollen sources for insects such as bees and butterflies.
5. Encourage flowers and grasses at the base and margins.
6. Look after trees and plant new ones.
7. Rejuvenate old hedges.
8. Take care to plant suitable species when planting new hedges.
9. Link the hedge with other wildlife habitats and plug gaps.
10. Observe and explore your hedge.

www.hedgeline.org.uk provides further information about planting and maintaining hedges.

Weed and pest control

Fertilisers contain high levels of nitrogen, potassium and phosphate which results in dense growth. When used on growing areas fertilisers not only benefit the plants they are intended for, but promote intense growth of weeds including goose grass (cleavers), nettles and docks resulting in the loss of many flowers. The use of pesticides and herbicides unless used very carefully, lead to loss of habitat and insects.

There are many organic alternatives which can be used to limit pests and promote plant growth. Growing and rotating a mixture of crops, adding organic matter such as compost or manure and using clover to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere will help develop a healthy fertile soil. Following these practices will create nutrient rich soil which grows strong and healthy crops.

If the growing area has a diversity of crops which are rotated year on year including fallow areas where flowers are allowed to flourish, then soil fertility will increase, the cycles of pests and disease will be broken and beneficial pollinators will be encouraged into the growing areas.

Ponds

A pond can be defined as a body of water, which can vary in size between the size of a sink and that of a football pitch, which holds water for four months or more. Ponds support two thirds of all freshwater species including the Common frog, Common toad, Teal, Common Great Diving Beetle, Pond Olive mayfly, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Broad-leaved pondweed, Great Crested Newt, Pillwort, and Medicinal leech. Creating new ponds is one of the simplest and most effective ways to create freshwater habitat.

Installing a pond will not only encourage beneficial predators into the growing space including a variety of amphibians and invertebrates but they can have an impact on wider environmental issues. Ponds help to reduce flooding and photosynthesising aquatic plants help to decrease atmospheric pollution.

The Freshwater Habitats Trust www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk ensures that the benefits of small water bodies are recognised in policy, in the UK and Europe. They work with other bodies to highlight the importance of small waterbodies in the water agenda and have a plethora of information available on their website.

If you'd like to create a pond on your allotment or community garden it's advisable to check the terms of your tenancy first. Some allotment tenancies and other land agreements place restrictions on ponds or may require express permission prior to work starting.

Long grass and meadow areas

Species-rich grasslands and meadows are a highly threatened habitat in the UK. The majority of grassland in Wales is improved by the addition of fertilisers, which has reduced the number of wild flowers and butterflies. Hay meadows are also a rare sight. Arable weeds including corn marigolds, speedwells, and field woundwort and corn spurrey are rare due to intensive agriculture, the use of herbicides and seed cleaning. To help reverse this trend, setting aside a border around your site or "wild" areas for wild flowers and grasses can increase the amount of plant and insect diversity on your site. These will also encourage small mammals such as hedgehogs and bats to visit and feed, helping reduce pests such as slugs, snails and flying insect pests.

Incorporating fallow areas into your growing plots can help to improve the fertility and provide nutrient rich soil for your crops. Fallow areas give the soil a rest from crop production and could incorporate long grasses or wildflowers or used to grow green manures.

Top tips

- allow grass and wild flowers to grow long from April until August then cut (in rotation) and remove cuttings, this will help create a species rich 'sward',
- locate your meadow next to a hedge,
- different grass heights support a wider range of insects and invertebrates,
- don't cut all of your meadow area all at once. Come up with a cutting rotation and vary the height. This variation will benefit invertebrates and provide shelter,
- try to leave a section of your grassy area standing over winter. This will provide much needed habitat for overwintering insects in the form of leaf litter, standing dead twigs or stems

- if you have wet areas, they should be valued as a biodiversity asset. These areas will become seasonally inundated by important invertebrates such as ground beetles.
- add yellow rattle seed to existing grass areas. This will help to reduce the dominance of grass and encourage more wildlife flower species. Yellow rattle should be sown in autumn after the grass has been raked or scarified and the seeds require a frost to germinate.

For more information see: www.buglife.org.uk

Strimming and burning

Try to avoid strimming or burning sections of the growing area. Strimming causes damage to wildlife living in long grasses. If you need to clear vegetation try using shears or an Austrian scythe as different grass heights can be achieved more easily. Austrian scythes are excellent tools for cutting large swards as well as around delicate plants.

All garden waste should be composted instead of burnt. Compost not only provides valuable habitat for hedgehogs and slow worms, but increases soil fertility. Burning compostable waste creates noxious fumes which can lead to soil contamination, is harmful to soil fauna and increases the risk of large scale fires.

Encouraging hedgehogs and other garden helpers

Wildlife like hedgehogs, toads and song thrushes should be encouraged into the garden as they eat pests including slugs and snails. Unfortunately due to a loss of habitat many of these species are in decline. Ecologists associated with The People's Trust for Endangered Species suggested that hedgehog numbers had declined over a third between 2003 and 2012.

There are a variety of ways that you can attract hedgehogs and other garden helpers into your growing area including:

- make sure there are access points into your garden including gaps in hedges and fences
- leave areas for wildlife
- build a hedgehog house
- provide access to freshwater
- avoid using slug pellets and chemicals
- make ponds hedgehog friendly by providing a way for them to climb out
- check long grass before cutting it
- check before turning your compost heap
- create a bug hotel
- install bat and bird boxes
- plant fruit and nut trees in your growing area.

Invasive non-native species

Invasive non-native plant species can cause substantial environmental damage; cost millions of pounds to tackle annually and reduce biodiversity. Rhododendron Ponticum releases toxins into the soil that prevents the growth of any other plant and so our native flora lose habitat. Some of these plants are so problematic they have been covered by legislation to control their spread, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. You're not obliged to control them on your own land but you are obliged to prevent them spreading onto other people's land or into the wild.

The best way to avoid spreading invasive non-native plants is to be competent at identifying them and to know how to dispose of them.

There is lots of information available to help you manage problem plants from the invasive non-native species pages of the Welsh Government website
<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/plantsseedsbiotechnology/invasive-non-native-species/be-plant-wise/?lang=en>

Through the website you can find factsheets to help you identify and manage:

Japanese Knotweed - <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/151214-japanese-knotweed-en.pdf>

Giant Hogweed - <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/151214-giant-hogweed-en.pdf>

Himalayan Balsam - <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/151214-himalayan-balsam-en.pdf>

Information sheets about non-native invasive species are also available at

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=47>

Field Guide to Invasive Plants and Animals in Britain - Bloomsbury ISBN: 9781408123188

Compost

Healthy soil contains thousands of different bacteria and fungi. You can support a healthy ecosystem beneath your feet by enriching your soil with compost, seaweed and well-rotted manure rather than relying on artificial fertilisers. Your soil will be even healthier and more diverse if you avoid digging more than is necessary and use your compost as a mulch. It will be broken down and taken into the soil by insects and worms, and will prevent the growth of weeds by shading the soil.

Not only is compost good for your soil but the compost heap itself can provide a cosy home for grass snakes who often lay eggs in them. If you are lucky enough to have grass snakes living in your compost heap, don't disturb them, start another heap.

Your heap will also be home to worms, beetles and other insects, and possibly frogs and newts.

Building a home for nature

It's a really fun activity for adults and children alike to build bug hotels, bird and bat boxes. Bird boxes need to be placed somewhere you can get them down and clean them in the winter. Insect hotels for solitary bees and other insects can be made of recycled materials like pallets, cardboard and broken bamboo canes

<http://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/thingstodo/inaweekend/bug-mansion.aspx>

<https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/givenatureahomeinyourgarden/gardenactivities/buildabatbox/>

Stone and log piles are an easy way to encourage biodiversity on the allotment. Rotting wood will provide ideal habitat for insects, frogs, toads and newts and will host a variety of fungi. Likewise damp cool stone piles will be popular with frogs, toads and newts. Try not to disturb them once you've made them. If you have children who enjoy moving stones and logs to find creatures just place individual stones or logs in a partially shaded spot for them to explore.

Permaculture

"Permaculture is a sustainable design system stressing the harmonious interrelationship of humans, plants, animals and the Earth. The core of permaculture is design and the working relationships and connections between all things." (Bill Mollison)

In practical terms in the allotment the twelve permaculture principles can be applied to your design and growing to make it more sustainable. It might look slightly messier than the traditional 'bare earth and shorn grass paths' allotment – but working with nature means less work for you and a harmonious relationship with the earth.

Find out more at <https://www.permaculture.org.uk/>

Plants for pollinators

It's well known that our pollinators are in crisis. The reasons for this include a lack of food sources due to changes in agriculture, the use of pesticides and climate change. The Welsh Government launched the Action Plan for Pollinators in 2013 to try and halt this decline. We can help by making our gardens and allotments a haven for our pollinators, without which we would have serious problems with our food supply, and an impoverished ecosystem. Many plants on the allotment are great food sources for pollinators; flowering herbs, fruit trees and bushes, beans, courgettes and asparagus. But why not interplant with other great pollinator plants to

extend the season, or have an ornamental border to increase the amount of bees, butterflies, moths and hoverflies in the allotment? The RHS have created lists of plants that support pollinators from early spring to late autumn.

Welsh Government Action Plan -

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/conservationbiodiversity/action-plan-for-pollinators/?lang=en>

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden/plants-for-pollinators>

Chapter 13 Additional Information and Resources

Information for local authorities

Welsh Government Community Grown Food Action Plan -

<http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/100715v9communitygrownfoodactionplanen.pdf>

Growing in the Community - http://www.local.gov.uk/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/4045787/PUBLICATION

Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908

Allotments Act 1922

Allotments Act 1925

Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1926

Allotments Act 1950

Local Government Wales Act 1994

Government of Wales Act 1998

National Assembly for Wales Transfer of Functions Order 1999

Landlord and Tenant Act 1927

Information for allotment holders and associations

The National Allotments Society:- www.nsalg.org.uk

Allotment Garden website www.allotment-garden.org

Information for growers

The National Allotments Society:- www.nsalg.org.uk

Growing The Future - <http://www.growingthefuture.co.uk/>

Royal Horticultural Society - www.rhs.org.uk

Garden Organic – www.gardenorganic.org.uk

Permaculture Association – www.permaculture.org.uk

Soil Association - www.soilassociation.org

Animal Welfare on Allotments - www.nsalg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Welfare-of-animals-on-allotments.pdf

Information for community growing groups

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens www.farmgarden.org.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens Community Growing Resource Pack:- <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-wales>

Community Land Advisory Service, CLAS Cymru:-
www.communitylandadvice.org.uk

Groundwork Wales - www.groundworkwales.org.uk

Keep Wales Tidy - www.keepwalestidy.org/

School growing resources

Growing Schools - www.growingschools.org.uk

Learning through landscapes - www.ltl.org.uk/wales

School Farms Network - www.schoolfarms.org.uk

RHS School Gardening - www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning

FCFCG School Resources - www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/resources-school-gardeners

Biodiversity resources

Wales Wildlife Trust - www.wildlifetrusts.org

Wales Biodiversity Partnership - www.biodiversitywales.org.uk

Royal Society Protection of Birds - <http://www.rspb.org.uk/whatwedo/wales>

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust - www.arc-trust.org

Welsh Beekeepers Association - www.wbka.com

Buglife - www.buglife.org.uk

Plantlife - www.plantlife.org.uk/wales

The Woodland Trust - www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Governance and funding resources

Wales Council for Voluntary Action - www.wcva.org.uk

Big Lottery Fund - www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Natural Resources Wales Funding Newsletter - <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/funding/?lang=en>

Wales Co-operative Centre – www.wales.coop

Other resources

Business Wales – www.businesswales.gov.wales

Action Plan for Pollinators –
www.gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/130723pollinator-action-plan-en.pdf

Wales Biodiversity Partnership - www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/BIODIVERSITY

Natural Resources – www.naturalresources.wales/?lang=en

Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
www.gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/?lang=en

Invasive Non Native Species
<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/plantsseedsbiotechnology/invasive-non-native-species/be-plant-wise/?lang=en>