Our Growing Community
What’s in this pack?

This pack has been developed to help Scottish communities to explore new places and more ways to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

In this pack you’ll find:
> How to use this pack
> The ‘Our Growing Community’ poster (packaged separately)
> Community growing matrix
> Community growing approaches – an overview

Guidance notes on:
> Allotments
> Backcourts & backgreens
> Civic & public buildings
> Community centres
> Community woodland
> Derelict & undeveloped land
> Ex-educational grounds
> Farm & agricultural land
> Forestry Commission Scotland managed land
> Green corridors
> Health sector & NHS estate
> High streets & town centres
> Historic buildings & estates
> Individual gardens
> Public parks & gardens
> Residential & amenity spaces
> School grounds
> Sheltered housing & care homes
> University & college grounds
> Work places
> Other places to grow food (including: balconies and terraces, golf courses, rail and bus stations, roadside verges and underpasses; roof tops, cemeteries and church yards, Ministry of Defence sites)
Helping local groups to visualise, plan and create their own food growing community

Use the Our Growing Community tool-kit to get your community ‘growing everywhere’... on the edge of the school playing field, in the flowerbeds outside the office, on that bit of derelict ground!

Where will you grow?

This pack has been developed to help Scottish communities explore new places and more ways to grow their own food.

Use it to help you:

- get inspired and spark ideas about community growing with your group or people in your area
- map and audit your local spaces and places that could be used for growing food
- explore the range of community growing options
- think about the practicalities of different growing approaches and find the ones that will work best for your community
- plan local action to develop your community growing projects and activities

Why do this?

More and more people in Scotland want to grow their own fruit and vegetables but land availability is a big challenge.

There are many spaces and places where food could be grown in our neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities – we need to think more creatively about where these are and how they could be used for growing food.

The information and materials in this pack will help you do this.

The Our Growing Community poster illustrates the wide variety of places that could be used for community growing – do any of these types of space exist in your area?

The Our Growing Community guidance notes provide more information about the different places where you could grow fruit and vegetables. They highlight ‘things to consider’ and describe how to ‘make it happen’. With real life examples and suggestions of ‘who can help’, the notes will help you find the right support and assistance to start your own food growing community.
Here are some ideas for a plan of action that you or your group could take to get people from the local community involved in developing your own ‘food growing community’.

Doing a growing space audit
Get a group of interested people together to explore ‘where could we grow?’

> create or draw your own local map and plot potential growing spaces
> conduct an ‘on foot’ growing space site audit – explore the area to find possible sites – take photographs and record information about site condition and ownership
> map and compile your findings as set of potential ‘community growing scenarios’ – then use this toolkit to identify what community growing approaches could work in the different spaces

Reality checking your ideas

> contact the ‘experts’ – these might be key people from the Council or use the list of ‘useful contacts’ in this pack – ask them to help you develop your ideas
> use their technical know-how and experience to help you work out the best way to take your ideas forward

Delivering your food growing community

> set up a local community growing group to oversee the delivery of your ideas
> produce an action plan for things to do in the short and longer term
> keep ‘experts’ on board – some might be able to offer advice and help you deliver your ideas, others might be able to help with funding and resources

Enjoy eating your locally grown fruit and veg...

Visualising your food growing community
Talk to the wider community about your ideas

> run a community visualisation event or hold workshops with different local groups – present the potential community growing scenarios for the area and get new ideas about them
> use the feedback from the event and workshops to identify the community growing options you want to explore further
# Community Growing Matrix

A quick reference guide to which community growing approaches will work best where

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This matrix is part of the *Our Growing Community* resource by greenspace scotland, 2013

Production of this resource was supported by Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society.

greenspace scotland is a registered Scottish Charity (No. SC034078) and a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland (No. 236105)
Abundance, foraging and scrumping involves collecting surplus produce (mainly fruit and putting it to good use). There are many fruit trees growing wild or in people's gardens – often a lot of this produce goes in the bin or is never harvested. Scrumping was an old term for stealing apples but today it is used to describe finding fruit and other edibles growing in public places such as road sides.

Allotments are probably the most familiar and traditional form of community growing. Allotments are areas of land divided into plots which individuals or groups of people garden. Plots are rented from allotment providers. A typical plot size is 200-250 square metres. Many sites offer smaller plot sizes, starter plots or raised beds for people new to allotment gardening or for those wishing to downsize. Modern sites often have small communal orchards, plots for community groups and communal areas.

Beekeeping involves the maintenance of honey bee colonies, commonly in hives. Bees will help with improving community growing productivity, the quality of the produce and will produce honey. Virtually all fruit and seed crop production on a growing space will benefit from honey bee pollination.

Community gardens are locally managed areas of land developed in response to the needs of the communities in which they are based. They have a strong social focus and function, often providing much needed greenspace in urban areas. Most of the gardening is communal with groups and individuals contributing to the cultivation of the whole site. Many community gardens include significant elements of fruit and vegetable growing within their activities.

Community market gardens are large areas of cultivated land, often with poly-tunnels and other infrastructure. They have a commercial focus in terms of food production and are usually under community or social ownership or management. Most operate on a social enterprise basis; aiming to provide produce at reasonable cost to the wider community e.g. through organic box deliveries to the local area.

Community orchards are collections of fruit, and sometimes nut, trees and bushes. A community orchard is open to local people, providing access to the produce grown. As well as enjoying the orchard, local people can share the harvest or profit from its sale and are often involved in taking responsibility for any work involved. A ‘virtual orchard’ involves planting fruit trees and bushes in individual gardens, with agreement from the garden owners to share the fruit and the harvest of it. In this way a community orchard can still be created where the availability of land is an issue.

Community small holdings are areas of land, bigger than a garden and smaller than a farm, which are used for productive agriculture or forestry. They can be comprised of families, individuals or communities, where people pool resources to hold land together.

Community supported agriculture is defined as a partnership between farmers and consumers where the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared between them. They can be farmer-led, where the community buys ‘shares’ and the return on these is produce; or community-led, where the community instigates and runs the scheme itself. Some communities do the growing themselves, others employ a grower.
Container growing – if there is not enough space for a vegetable plot then growing vegetables in containers is a good way to grow your own. A hanging basket, patio pot, old tyres, barrels and builders bags are all containers that are commonly used for growing food. Many types of containers can be used and adapted; the options are endless!

Edible landscapes (including edible borders and hedges) involves growing food in places which are less traditionally associated with community growing. In many cases this involves using civic and ‘incidental’ spaces in towns and cities. For example, growing vegetables and herbs in and amongst, or instead of, formal landscaping in flower beds and civic planting. This approach requires a rethink about the role and use of the public realm and the landscaping and management of public areas.

Forest gardening involves growing a multi-storey arrangement of perennial and self-seeding plants to provide food and other products. They are designed to be sustainable, edible landscapes which follow the pattern of young woodland systems. A forest garden could be described as a relaxed, informal orchard with room for soft fruit and vegetables to grow.

Healing and therapeutic gardens are spaces that are specifically designed to meet the physical, psychological and social needs of the people using the garden as well as their care-givers, family members and friends. They can be found in a variety of health care related settings. They can be designed to include active uses such as raised planters for horticultural therapy, alongside programmes for passive uses.

Landshare is a process where people with gardens or other sites that they cannot manage are matched with people who are keen to grow food but have no space in which to do it. Garden or site owners often receive a proportion of the produce in return for donating their space. Typically it involves a website where landowners can post details of sites they would like to offer and where potential growers can register their interest in taking on land.

Nectar bars are areas of land in, next to or near community growing spaces which are managed for wildflowers. The aim is to attract pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies to support the pollination of fruit and seed crops.

Raised beds are enclosed areas of soil or compost which are higher than the surrounding ground. Higher beds make it easier for those with physical disabilities to use. Beds can be designed to fit the space and are a good solution for growing vegetables in areas of hard landscaping or where space is limited.

Roof gardens are gardens created on the roofs of building. They can provide food growing spaces, habitats for wildlife and community gardens. The practice of cultivating food on the rooftops of building is sometimes referred to as rooftop farming and is usually done using container, green roof or hydroponics, aeroponics or air-dynaponics systems.

Temporary growing is the creation of food growing areas on land that will only be available for a limited amount of time. This mainly includes stalled development or derelict gap sites, for which a long term use has yet to be found. In the longer term these spaces will be developed and/or built on, but increasingly these sorts of spaces are being used ‘in the meantime’ for community uses, including food growing with the agreement that when development starts the community will move elsewhere.

Vertical growing – urban gardens with small outdoor spaces can make the most of their walls to plant everything from lavish flower displays to home-grown vegetables. The trend is growing in popularity in city gardens, as well as a number of community gardening projects, because of its eco-friendly credentials and space-saving techniques.
What community growing approaches will work here?

> Community gardens
> Community orchards
> Beekeeping
> Nectar bars

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

An allotment site is an area of land divided into plots which individuals or groups of people garden. 200-250 square metres is generally regarded as a typical plot size.

Allotment sites can be leased from the local authority, private landowners or owned by the plot holders themselves. There are three main types of organisations involved in the day-to-day leasing and management of allotments: local authority, other landowners and allotment associations or societies.

Modern allotment sites often have plots for community groups, small communal orchards or communal areas for the amenity of all plot holders on the site.

Making it happen

An allotment site with an existing community plot or garden is a good way to get into allotment gardening.

If you want your own plot you will need to contact your local authority to find out about sites in your area – there will probably be a waiting list. Check for privately run sites too. Check the SAGS website for new sites and contacts. The audit ‘Finding Scotland’s Allotments’ has a list of most sites across Scotland.

Some sites offer smaller half-size or starter plots for people new to allotment gardening or those who wish to downsize.

Local authority strategies on open space can help to make the case for more allotment sites. There may be an allotment officer for your area who can help.

Things to consider

Waiting lists for allotment plots are often very long and it can take years before you get a plot! However, this is changing and many local authorities are now working with Housing Associations, Development Trusts, the NHS and other organisations to provide land and support for new allotment sites all over Scotland.

There may be challenges to setting up new allotment sites e.g. around legislative issues, finding the right land or negative perceptions. The Scottish Allotment Site Design Guide can help address these. It includes, for example, recommendations on site design and overcoming negative perceptions. It advocates that the benefits of growing your own food more than compensates for the hard work in setting up a new allotment.

Community groups looking to set up and manage allotment sites will need to meet certain requirements including having a constituted allotment management group and meeting insurance and health and safety requirements.
Who can help?

Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS) facilitate and support allotment community growing. Prime mover in supporting new sites and existing associations across Scotland.

SAGS resources:
- Finding Scotland's Allotments (2007)
- Scottish Allotment Site Design Guide (2013)

www.sags.org.uk

Planning Aid Scotland provides guidance and advice on planning for community developments including establishing allotments.

www.planningaidscotland.org.uk

Real life examples

Bridgend Growing Communities

An organic community garden and allotment project based in Edinburgh. It is run as a hub for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to gain the skills and confidence to garden and grow healthy food. A range of programmes are available to help develop life and employability skills.

www.bridgendcommunity.blogspot.co.uk

Kirkcaldy Community Gardens & Allotments CIC

Originally the Kirkcaldy Allotments Group was set up to campaign for more allotments to meet demand from local residents. They formed the Community Interest Company in order to lease a site within Ravenscraig Walled Garden for allotment provision.

As well as individual plots the site provides a training area with raised beds, poly tunnels and plots for local schools and community groups. A new community orchard is being set up.

www.kirkcaldyallotments.org.uk

Healthy Happy Communities Community Allotment

The Healthy Happy Communities Project in Arbroath is a local collaborative which aims to improve the nutritional health of women of child-bearing age and young families. The Community Allotment is an arm of this project and involves community members of all ages.

Local nurseries, community projects and volunteers have mini-plots within the allotment while there is also a general team ‘muck-in’ approach to the upkeep of the allotment as a whole. Produce grown is used by the nurseries, community groups and volunteers.

A number of communities are incorporating different forms of community growing in their backgreens and backcourts.

These are semi-public spaces which provide a communal greenspace for those living around them and are traditionally associated with tenement properties.

In recent years there has been increasing interest in regenerating these spaces to meet modern day needs.

Making it happen

The community is on the doorstep – they are a source of volunteers and skills. Involving them will mean that it is more likely to be cared for and looked after.

Consider creating a ‘social space’ which appeals to more people – this might lead to more people becoming involved in food growing.

These sites offer secure space for community growing – they are mostly only physically accessible to those who live around them and are well overlooked.

Things to consider

Often backcourts and backgreens are not accessible to the wider community – this can have a knock on effect on eligibility for certain funding sources.

You may have to deal with physical constraints in terms of size, access and shade.

Many backcourts and backgreens have become overgrown abandoned spaces and need significant work to bring them back into active use.

Shared ownership of these spaces can mean it is sometimes difficult to gain consensus and agreement about their use.

Who (if anyone) maintains the space right now? Is there a factor or property agency who needs to be involved and consulted?

Who can help?

Edible Estates aims to support communities to transform the greenspaces within social housing estates into beautiful, enjoyable and edible landscapes.

www.edibleestates.co.uk

There may be a local Council greenspace department or a local greenspace trust or group who offer support and advice in your area. Details from Council websites or greenspace scotland.

www.greenspacescotland.org.uk
Real life examples

The Edinburgh Community Backgreens Association aims to inspire and support tenement dwellers to work with their neighbours to create beautiful and bountiful backgreens. A range of information and guidance is available on setting up a backgreen group and project.

www.ecba.org.uk

Wheatfield Community Backgreen in Edinburgh is shared by 262 flats in 21 tenements. Part of the backgreen is set aside for vegetable growing allotments and there are a number of beds with flowers and other plants.

A large grass lawn is used for garden parties and similar activities. There is a large locked shed for keeping shared gardening equipment and composting facilities, including a ‘Rocket’ composter.

www.wheatfield-backgreen.wikispot.org

The Sunshine on Leith Gardens in Leith, are surrounded by approximately 200 households. The Gardens are different from many other backgreen sites as they have direct access from the street to the greenspace within the tenement square. This has enabled the involvement of people from the wider community in the project as they don’t need to come through a tenement stair.

The Gardens include 40 raised beds – ten of which are used by residents which live directly around the site. The remainder have been taken by folk who live in the Leith area. As there is a long allotment waiting list in the area the 1m by 2m beds were designed to maximise the number of people who could have a growing space on the site. A mini-poly tunnel has also been created which extends the growing season and protects the plants from pests.

www.ecba.org.uk/sol-gardens.aspx

The Back Garden in Glasgow. In January 2010, the backcourts of these flats in Glasgow’s Anderston district were an eyesore; derelict and a favourite haunt of fly-tippers where burned-out cars rubbed shoulders with discarded mattresses.

Today, this self-contained area overlooked by 120 homes, is a thriving community garden enjoying seasonal rich harvests of fruit and vegetables.

Friendships have blossomed. Neighbours, even from adjoining properties who had never spoken, now share advice on pruning and planting out. Gardening enthusiasts from farther afield in Anderston have made the Back Garden their own whilst others enjoy its relaxed amenity simply as a place to meet.

www.annexecommunities.org.uk/content/the_back_garden/

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greenspace scotland is a registered Scottish Charity (No. SC034078) and a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland (No. 236105)
What community growing approaches will work here?

> Edible landscapes
> Raised beds and borders
> Roof gardens
> Vertical growing

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Can we make better use of the spaces around public buildings? Does the town hall or council office or health centre or police station have spare land that is not being used or existing land that could be put to better use?

For example, flower beds could be vegetable plots, car park perimeters could be herb beds, formal ground and gardens could include space for fruit growing and vegetable beds. These spaces could combine fruit trees and bushes, vegetables and herbs, with flowers to help with pollination.

Making it happen

Many of these places already exist and are well cultivated, just not for food growing. A local greenspace manager or parks department may provide a route in to exploring the use of council sites and land.

There is an increasing profile of growing food in this way, generated in part by the high profile ‘Incredible Edible’ movement. A number of Scottish Councils are now supporting the use of their formal beds and public areas to showcase, promote and generate interest in community growing.

Taking food growing into the wider public arena, beyond the allotment site or community garden, offers opportunities to raise awareness and increase involvement.

Volunteering and training opportunities could be provided and expanded to include food growing for horticultural staff, trainees and placements within the Council and through local employment schemes.

Invite people to help themselves – promote healthy eating by allowing the public to take produce as they walk by.

Things to consider

Public perception of how these spaces are looked after and managed may change. Food growing is often associated with negative perceptions of allotment sites being untidy and unsightly. Communication will be needed about what is happening and why.

Spaces and sites will need to be really well-designed and well-maintained due to their location in very visible public places.

In seeking to influence the use of civic and public areas for growing spaces there may be a need to motivate council officers and councillors to ‘switch them on’ to community growing and demonstrate that changing how these spaces are used and managed could be cost effective and still create very attractive displays.
Who can help?

There may be a local Council greenspace department who can help, or a voluntary local greenspace trust or group who will offer support and advice in your area. You can get details from Council websites or greenspace scotland.

www.greenspacescotland.org.uk

A number of local Transition Town initiatives and local Climate Challenge Fund groups and projects are developing local food growing plans which may support this idea.

www.transitionscotland.org
http://ccf.keepsScotlandbeautiful.org/

The Incredible Edible network are the umbrella group for groups and communities working to increase access to local food.

www.incredibleediblenetwork.org.uk

Real life examples

EATS Project, Fife

Fife Council is transforming public planting spaces in the Kirkcaldy area. The project Edible and Tasty Spaces (EATS) is turning public planting beds into a seasonal mix of bedding, herb and vegetable plants, in partnership with the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH).

The Council’s Leisure and Cultural Services changed two flower beds in Kirkcaldy in 2012. Flowers, herbs and vegetables were maintained by SAMH volunteers. Signs were installed at the two beds welcoming people to harvest the produce. Vegetables were also given to Fife Community Food Project and distributed to community food groups.

EATS expanded in 2013 to eight beds in Kirkcaldy and the involvement of Greener Kirkcaldy volunteers in developing these. Markinch Environment Action Group are now establishing EATS in their village and West Lothian Council are trialling EATS in Broxburn.

http://fifeeats.wordpress.com/
twitter.com/FifeEATs

Edible Borders, Stirling

Stirling Council’s Land Services team transformed seven city garden sites by planting a collection of vegetables, herbs and annual bedding. The project provided a learning opportunity for three Modern Day Apprentices who followed the journey of the Edible Borders from seed to harvest.

www.goingcarbonneutralstirling.org.uk

Incredible Edible Todmorden

A community-led grow-your-own initiative that has transformed the way local people connect with food production and public greenspaces in Todmorden in West Yorkshire.

This community is leading the way in its commitment to the production of food by local people for local consumption. The aim is to make the town self-sufficient in vegetables, orchard fruits and eggs by 2018, and ultimately to enable the town to source the majority of staple food locally. The community grows almost everywhere including the health centre, police station and railway station.

www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk

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What community growing approaches will work here?

- Containers
- Raised beds
- Community orchard
- Community garden

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Can we make better use of the spaces around our Community Centres?

There is a wealth of activity in Community Centres across Scotland with all sections of the community involved, but this creativity doesn’t generally spill out into the space around the centres which is often grey and uninspiring.

Would it be possible to place containers or raised beds outside your community centre? Could landscaped flower beds be turned into vegetable plots?

It might also be the case that part of the grassed area around a Community Centre could be turned into a Community Garden or Community Orchard.

Making it happen

Potentially the local groups using the centre could be interested in taking on a raised bed or a planter as part of their normal activities.

A lot of Community Centres host cookery skills workshops, breakfast/out-of-school clubs and community cafes where the produce could be used as and when available.

The Community Centre growing space could also be used for training sessions in ‘urban gardening’ and the skills learned here could be utilised across the community. People on allotment waiting lists could be offered a smaller plot in the community centre garden – their food growing skills would be shared with others and would offer inspiration.

Things to consider

Before creating raised beds and community garden space make sure the groups using the Community Centre want to get involved in food growing.

A lot of people/groups would not have considered growing their own and may feel they lack the skills – begin small scale and offer training and support.

Creating a community growing space may be a great way of bringing the different groups that use the Community Centre together.

It is important to ensure that issues around ownership, maintenance and cost of food growing are set out in a mutual agreement between users of the centre.

Most Community Centres have voluntary management committees who are responsible for running the centre and some employ staff. Both the Management Committee and the staff would need to be ‘switched on’ to the idea of food growing in order to make it happen.
Who can help?

There may be a local Council greenspace department who can help, or a voluntary local greenspace trust or group who will offer support and advice in your area. You can get details from Council websites or greenspace scotland.

www.greenspacescotland.org.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other greenspaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.

www.farmgarden.org.uk

If you are interested in creating an orchard at your Community Centre then Scottish Orchards can help with support and advice and can provide fruit trees suitable for the Scottish climate.

www.scottishorchards.com

Real life examples

Columcille Centre in Edinburgh provides day resources for adults with learning disabilities. The Columcille Gardeners have recently established a Gardenshare project with neighbours. The project is re-growing and rehabilitating a garden that has been unused for many years. Fruit trees and vegetable plots are being planted, as well as a nature area. The project links neighbours and brings an urban greenspace back into shared use. The group also work in the Gilmerton Community Garden every Monday.

www.columcille-centre.co.uk

Loanhead Community Learning Centre in Midlothian has a ‘Gardening Squad’ offering volunteering opportunities in the Loanhead Community Garden. Duties include: helping to maintain the different zones, looking after the fruit and vegetables, watering and weeding.

www.lclc.org.uk/index.html

Community group Fruitful Callander planted a Community Orchard of 33 fruit trees in November 2011 at the McLaren Community Leisure Centre. Fruitful Callander has now been incorporated into a Callander Community Development Trust group called Greener Callander.

www.callandercdt.org.uk
Community woodland

What community growing approaches will work here?

> Allotments
> Community gardens
> Community orchards
> Community supported agriculture
> Forest gardens
> Raised beds

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

A community woodland is one partly or completely controlled by the local community, through a community woodland group. The woodland may be owned or leased by the group, or managed in partnership with another organisation, such as Forestry Commission Scotland.

An increasing number of community woodland groups are working in partnership to create community gardens and allotments, polytunnels and community composting schemes.

Making it happen

A wide range of community growing approaches can work in Community Woodlands.

Things to consider

Previously wooded areas may require significant soil clearance and preparation. Tree roots and invasive weeds may be an initial challenge.

It is illegal to establish any non-native plant in the ‘wild’ in Scotland due to the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. Some community woodlands may count as the ‘wild’ under the Act – so it’s important to know which plants can be used.

Who can help?

Community Woodlands Association is the representative body for Scotland’s community woodland groups.

www.communitywoods.org

Reforesting Scotland is restoring Scotland’s forest cover and culture.

www.reforestingscotland.org

Forest gardening in Scotland

www.scottishforestgarden.wordpress.com

Scottish Wild Harvests Association

www.scottishwildharvests.org.uk

Agroforestry Research Trust

www.agroforestry.co.uk

Real life examples

Kilfinan Community Forest involves the local community in managing and developing a local forest area. In 2010, it purchased 127 hectares of the Acharossan Forest from the Forestry Commission Scotland. A range of community initiatives have been developed including the Kyles Allotment Group.

www.kilfinancommunityforest.co.uk

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What community growing approaches will work here?

- Temporary growing
- Beekeeping
- Nectar bars
- Container planting
- Raised beds

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Derelict land and spaces where development has stalled are a feature of our towns and cities – and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

By creating temporary growing spaces on derelict and undeveloped land we can bring land into active and productive use and provide a focus for community action.

Making it happen

A lot of these spaces are in highly populated areas so there is potential for a lot of people to be involved.

Derelict spaces are often highly visible and attract anti-social behaviour. People living nearby are often interested in seeing something positive happen there.

Depending on the condition of the site it might be possible to begin by inviting local people to a site-clearing event or a social get together to find out if there is an appetite for food growing.

Things to consider

Because there is likely to be an aspiration to develop the land in the longer term, the way the food growing is organised must reflect this and be ready to move on or have an ‘exit strategy’.

Be creative about using containers and ‘mobile’ raised beds for vegetables. Some temporary projects also keep bees on their plots.

Sometimes it can be hard to identify who actually owns a vacant space.

A good place to start looking is the Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Survey or the Registers of Scotland.

When you have found a space and identified the landowner it is important to put the right legal arrangements in place so that the landowner is comfortable with the interim use of the land.

You may have to deal with contamination issues if the site is ex-industrial. It is advisable to contact your Council’s Environmental Health service for advice if you are planning to grow directly in the ground.

The department of Public Health in Toronto has developed a guide for people who want to start an urban garden and need more information about the safety of their soil. It will help identify the ‘risk’ level of a site and recommend actions for soil testing and reducing exposure to urban soil contaminants www.toronto.ca/health/lead/soil_gardening.htm

In the long term, if or when the site is eventually built on; the time spent on building the skills and interest of the community will help to make the case for ‘moving’ growing activities to another site or space.
Who can help?

The Community Land Advisory Service is an impartial, collaborative service which aims to increase community access to land. It helps communities and land managers gain satisfactory agreements on access to land by providing guidance on technical lease agreements and related issues.

www.communitylandadvice.org.uk

Glasgow City Council supports the use of land which currently has no function, including for groups who wish to improve a ‘stalled space’. (Funding for projects in Glasgow may be available via their Community Support for Stalled Spaces fund.)


The Registers of Scotland provide a range of Land and Property Data reports and services. There is a cost for this service.

www.ros.gov.uk

Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Survey provides a register of urban vacant and derelict sites.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Planning/SVDLSSiteRegister

Real life examples

Planning Aid Scotland has produced a comprehensive guide to the Scottish planning system for people undertaking community-led developments.

www.planningaidscotland.org.uk/page/141/Planning-for-Community-Developments-practical-guide.htm

The Concrete Garden is a community space for growing food in Possilpark in north Glasgow. The project uses reclaimed industrial land and uses a modular system of grow boxes and bags made from recycled materials. It aims to be a demonstration site for urban food growing and encourages local people to re-create what they see at home.

www.facebook.com/theconcretegarden?sk=wall

Ravenscraig Walled Garden, Kirkcaldy is owned by Fife Council and was formerly managed as a nursery by Community Services. This use ceased in 2006 and since then Kirkcaldy Community Gardens & Allotments CIC and Greener Kirkcaldy have worked with Fife Council to develop allotments and a community orchard on the site.

www.greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk/community-orchard/

www.kirkcaldyallotments.org.uk/index.asp?MainID=14221

Organic Growers of Fairlie have developed a community garden and allotment site on a derelict boatyard site in Ayrshire.

www.organicgrowersfairlie.co.uk

Woodlands Community Garden in Glasgow has transformed a derelict gap site into an outdoor community centre. A third of the garden is dedicated to raised beds giving local people the chance to growing their own veg, herbs and fruit in a supportive environment. The rest of the garden is a shared resource designed to accommodate social, cultural and environmental activities.

www.woodlandscommunitygarden.org.uk
What community growing approaches will work here?

- Allotments
- Containers
- Community gardens
- Community orchards
- Community market gardens
- Raised beds

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

School closures and mergers mean that in some neighbourhoods, where a future use for the buildings or land has not been identified, these once vibrant and busy spaces have fallen dormant, with some becoming derelict.

Ex-educational grounds often consist of large grassed areas and flat playing and sports pitch areas which could potentially lend themselves well to other community uses.

Making it happen

In general these are located close to people’s homes – they will be physically accessible to more people. They will be well ‘overlooked’ and potentially more secure and safe from vandalism.

Their location could increase the likelihood of more people getting involved in a community growing project, particularly if there is a local allotment waiting list.

There could be opportunities to combine with other functions such as a garden or informal play space, meaning that more people in the area might use and support it.

Community lease or ownership might be an option for community groups or organisations who are ‘ready’.

Things to consider

Who actually owns the site?
It might be the Council Education department or a private owner. They may be less experienced in working with communities in relation to use of greenspace.

Who will maintain the space?
The owner or manager may not want to undertake any additional responsibilities. But if the community is taking on part of the site this may reduce their maintenance costs.

There may be uncertainty about how long the land will be available for community use, particularly if there are long term development plans for the area. It may be necessary to consider this a ‘temporary’ community space.

The use of educational grounds currently or previously used as playing fields or sports pitches may result in statutory objections with regards to the loss of use of these spaces.
Who can help?

Community Growing Solutions supports communities and organisations to develop and deliver growing based and food related projects across Scotland.

www.communitygrowingsolutions.co.uk

Edible Estates aims to support communities to transform greenspaces within social housing estates into beautiful, enjoyable and edible landscapes.

www.edibleestates.co.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other greenspaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.

www.farmgarden.org.uk

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www.communitylandadvice.org.uk

Real life examples

Bothwell Community Garden

The Organic Growers of Bothwell have transformed a derelict playing field, formerly occupied by Bothwell Primary School, into a community garden. It has over 50 raised beds (including beds adapted for use by young children and those with limited mobility), two polytunnels, an orchard, soft-fruit area and several areas dedicated to wildlife.

The garden has proved to be extremely successful and popular with the local community and there is a long waiting list for raised beds.

Due to the project involving the loss of an area of land previously used as a sports pitch, the Group had to overcome statutory objections from sportscotland to their planning application.

http://bothwellcommunitygarden.wordpress.com/

Raploch Green and Growing

is located on a brown field which was previously the site of a special school. It aims to revitalise redundant and neglected greenspaces in Raploch by turning them into community growing spaces.

It also aims to give local people the support skills and confidence that they need to grow their own food.

www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org/Projects/raploch-green-a-growing.html
What community growing approaches will work here?

> Allotments
> Community gardens
> Community orchards
> Community market gardens
> Community small holdings
> Community supported agriculture

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Using farm and agricultural land for production of local food might sound obvious, but in most cases the food produced on farms is not sold locally.

The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) approach is a partnership between a farmer and a local community providing mutual benefits and reconnecting people to the land where their food is grown.

CSA can be organised in many different ways. Sometimes the growing is done by the farmer and local people are members of a scheme. Other times a community group leases land from the farmer and does the farming/growing themselves.

Making it happen

The advantages of having access to farm and agricultural land are many. Because the growing space is likely to be bigger than most urban growing spaces there is the opportunity to offer a range of growing approaches to local people.

The sites are likely to be able to host both individual allotment plots and community gardens/orchards and thereby serve different needs in the community.

There is also the option of installing larger scale beds and polytunnels to produce food in a community market garden set up – to be run as a social enterprise providing local produce at a reasonable cost to the wider community.

The size of the site and its location might also lend itself to rearing livestock such as chickens and pigs.

It may also provide a starting point for engaging local farmers in programmes for school children. This would teach the children where food comes from. For the farmer this may be the first step towards engaging more widely with the local community.

Things to consider

Engaging with the local community on food growing may not be at the forefront of the local farmer’s mind! Changes of land use may affect the farmer’s payments from the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

There could also be an impact on Agricultural Property Relief and Single Farm Payment entitlement for the owner.

On the other hand, more and more farmers are looking to diversify and make the most of local specialities and heritage in terms of produce. A partnership with a local community group or interested groups of local people with a range of skills might just be the catalyst for something new to happen.

It may also be the case that the farmer doesn’t want to get involved with the community growing but would be willing to lease a plot of land to the local community. In that case, a well thought out lease is important. The Community Land Advisory Service can help with this.
On a very practical level, access to a growing site on agricultural land has to be considered. It is likely to be less accessible for people without cars and parking might be an issue. Smallholding is an approach that is governed and affected by national legislation and this should be investigated fully if you are thinking of exploring this option.

**Who can help?**

The **Soil Association** provides information and support on Community Supported Agriculture. [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)

**Nourish Scotland** is Scotland’s sustainable local food network and runs the ‘new farmer programme’. [www.nourishscotland.org](http://www.nourishscotland.org)

More about **small holdings in Scotland** is available on the website of the ‘accidental smallholder’. [www.accidentalsmallholder.net](http://www.accidentalsmallholder.net)

**Scottish Orchards** can help with support and advice and can provide fruit trees suitable for the Scottish climate. [www.scottishorchards.com/new_scottish_Orchards/Welcome.html](http://www.scottishorchards.com/new_scottish_Orchards/Welcome.html)

**Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society** facilitate and support allotment community growing. They are the prime mover in supporting new sites and existing associations across Scotland. [www.sags.org.uk](http://www.sags.org.uk)

**Community Land Advisory Service** helps communities and land managers gain satisfactory agreements on access to land by providing guidance on lease agreements and related issues. [www.communitylandadvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylandadvice.org.uk)

**Loxley Valley Community Farm** is a community smallholding which provides members with the opportunity to produce their own food and develop a more involved community. The group has an annual membership which allows each member to buy one share in vegetables, pig, meat, poultry or eggs. The group works as a cooperative, with members working on the farm and all getting a share of the produce. [www.loxleyvalleycommunityfarm.org.uk](http://www.loxleyvalleycommunityfarm.org.uk)

**Real life examples**

**Fernaig Community Trust** in the West Highlands bought 110 acres of farm land to create agricultural and horticultural opportunities for people living locally. A field is used for allotments and 10 smallholdings are let, space was also set aside for a community orchard. [www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=226640](http://www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=226640)

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What community growing approaches will work here?

- Allotments
- Community market gardens
- Community orchards
- Raised beds
- Community small holdings
- Beekeeping

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) manages the Scottish Minister’s National Forest Estate to help deliver the Scottish Forestry Strategy.

This strategy sets out a number of outcomes and objectives for improving the health and wellbeing of people and their communities. These include:

- develop strong relationships between communities and their local woodlands
- assist urban and rural regeneration
- contribute to the provision of sites for community facilities

FCS is willing to consider suggestions for how the National Forest Estate might deliver wider benefits to society, including the provision of land for community growing. Proposals for using land for community growing projects will be considered on their own merits on a case by case basis.

Making it happen

The National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS), managed by the FCS, provides an opportunity for eligible groups to apply to buy or lease National Forest Estate Land to meet local development needs, which could include community growing spaces.

As the provision of allotments is a duty of local authorities, FCS’s preferred approach to supporting allotment provision is to lease the land directly to Councils. If a community-based group is eligible and interested in acquiring land for allotments themselves, they may apply to the National Forest Land Scheme; the processes and procedures for Community Acquisitions will apply.

Things to consider

Applications from communities to buy or lease land under the NFLS will be assessed against a number of criteria, including:

- community organisation is eligible to apply to the scheme e.g. it has open membership and is geographically defined
- demonstrates evidence of local community support and the capacity to manage the land
- the project will provide net additional public benefit and benefit the whole community rather than only some individuals in the community
- the project will not have a detrimental impact on management of the wider forest.
The majority of land managed by FCS is in rural Scotland and at some distance from settlements. There may also be other considerations, including land type and existing uses, which may impact on potential projects. To help work through these communities are recommended to:

1. check that the forest they have an interest in is managed by FCS by reviewing a map of FCS land holdings
   www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-857DT5
2. contact their local FCS office to discuss specific site issues
   www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-8see3y

Communities leasing or buying land under the NFLS will be required to be formally constituted and a number of specific governance procedures need to be in place. The community organisation may need legal support and advice on the conditions of land transfer.

Who can help?

Forestry Commission Scotland can provide further information on the National Forest Land Scheme and examples of successful community applications.
www.forestry.gov.uk/nfls

The Community Land Advisory Service is an impartial service which aims to increase community access to land across the UK. They help communities and land managers gain agreement on access to land and provide guidance on technical lease agreements and related issues.
www.communitylandadvice.org.uk

Community Woodlands Association is the representative body for Scotland’s community woodland groups.
www.communitywoods.org

Real life examples

Sunny Lochaber United Gardeners (SLUG) worked with Forestry Commission Scotland to create 17 allotments on forest land in Cowhill, very close to Fort William.

Cowhill was originally purchased by Forestry Commission Scotland with the purpose of the land being used for the benefit of the community. The site provides access to woodlands very close to the local community of Fort William and so was an ideal place for the allotments to be situated.
www.slugallotments.co.uk/
What community growing approaches will work here?

> ‘Informal’ orchards
> DIY seed planting
> Foraging

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

By green corridors we mean footpaths, cycle paths, canal towpaths, old railway lines, etc. They may link different parts of a town or city, provide links to the surrounding countryside or link greenspaces together. Green corridors may be individual routes or form part of a network of managed routes.

Making it happen

Consider a less formal approach to food growing here. For example, the planting of soft fruit bushes could encourage foraging.

Users of the route could be encouraged to plant seeds and take the produce that they want. Promotion and awareness raising will be needed to let people know that they are allowed to do this: “Plant your own seeds and see them grow on your daily commute”

Produce grown could include native plants which are good for wildlife too.

A project like this could also provide a way to bring different communities together along a route.

Green network development is a strategic priority in a number of areas. There a number of local and regional organisations which may provide support and backing for this type of project e.g. Central Scotland Green Network and other green network partnerships.

Local open space or greenspace strategies may promote and prioritise both green network development and community growing – this sort of project could deliver outcomes for both.

Things to consider

Getting communities and route users involved and ‘doing it’ from the beginning could be challenging as it will involve a different mind-set about what these spaces and routes are for.

You may need to involve and generate support and interest from multiple communities, not just your own.

Who is responsible for these spaces? The routes may be in multiple ownerships as they cross different land holdings and straddle boundaries between local authority areas. They may be privately owned but with public access rights. This may affect what you are allowed to do on them.

You should also consider the existing management of the routes, such as grass cutting or drainage, when planning growing areas.

Think about the existing biodiversity of the green corridor before introducing new planting to avoid damage to existing habitats and species.
Who can help?

**Abundance** is a movement that aims to make better use of neglected local fruit trees such as apples, pears and plums by organising volunteers to harvest the fruit. The [Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/home/local-food-project/growing-trends/731-abundance) has more information.

Scottish Orchards help people develop their own community orchards. They can help schools, community groups, councils, farmers, landowners and companies. [www.scottishorchards.com](http://www.scottishorchards.com)

Sustrans works with communities, policymakers and other organisations to create better walking and cycling links, including the National Cycle Network. They may be able to offer advice and support in relation to growing projects on the Network or using active travel routes to get to growing sites. [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

Paths for All promotes walking for health and the development of multi-use path networks in Scotland. Support and information on developing and managing paths includes ‘Adopt a Path’ which involves local people taking ownership of local paths. [www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk)

Contact your local council access or core path plan officer to discuss opportunities for community growing projects on local green networks.

Real life examples

**Colliers Way linear orchard** was planted by Sustrans on Colliers Way - Route 24 of the National Cycle Network between Radstock and Frome. The orchard consists of English apple trees planted at intervals to highlight disappearing orchards in Somerset and echo self-seeded fruit trees (from apple cores thrown from trains) along the route. [www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/art-and-the-travelling-landscape/Art-Trails/colliers-way](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/art-and-the-travelling-landscape/Art-Trails/colliers-way)

**Incredible Edible Todmorden** have developed food growing beds on the canal towpath. [www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk](http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk)
Health sector land & NHS estate

What community growing approaches will work here?

> Allotments
> Containers
> Community gardens
> Community orchards
> Healing and therapeutic gardens
> Raised beds

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Across Scotland NHS and private health sector facilities are often located close to or within towns, cities and neighbourhoods. These include hospitals, local health centres and residential and day care facilities.

Many health facilities are set in and surrounded by significant areas of green or civic space which often has limited amenity use or value for patients, staff or the local community.

Making it happen

The health benefits of growing food are well documented. These can help to make the case for health sector grounds being used to deliver wider health outcomes.

All aspects of gardens and gardening offer a range therapeutic and health benefits: providing a refuge from the hospital environment and illness, access to fresh air, physical activity and social space. Patients, staff, visitors and residents are all potential beneficiaries and a source of support and volunteers to look after and use growing spaces. Allowing and supporting the local community to use spaces for growing means that there is more support for managing and maintaining them.

The use of health sector land for growing is on the increase with a number of high profile examples. These could provide an inroad into opening up discussions with your local health partnership about opportunities on their sites.

Contact your local Community Health Partnership or Local Health Promotion officer.

Things to consider

Use of health sector spaces is unlikely to result in a permanent transfer of land to communities for growing food. These sites will be considered to be part of an asset base that holds a financial value for the owner.

The health provider may be concerned about any additional costs that occur in the creation and management of growing spaces.

Support will be needed from both strategic decision makers and facility managers.

There may be specific land use constraints within Private Finance Initiative hospital contracts.
Who can help?

**Trellis Scotland** supports communities and NHS professionals in many NHS estates to develop gardens and garden activities through a range of free or low cost advice, support, training and good practice exchange services. They can share the combined experience of over 200 therapeutic gardening projects throughout Scotland.

Trellis Scotland are building and designing gardens with food growing spaces in a number of Scottish hospitals. They have lots of advice on adaptive design, making projects sustainable and getting people involved.

[www.trellisscotland.org.uk](http://www.trellisscotland.org.uk)

**Gardening Leave** helps troubled Armed Forces veterans by tending to their invisible wounds of conflict using horticultural therapy and growing fruit and vegetables in a walled garden. The charity supports veterans on their journey to good health and transition to civilian life.

[www.gardeningleave.org](http://www.gardeningleave.org)

**Community Land Advisory Service** is an impartial, collaborative service which aims to increase community access to land across the UK. CLAS helps communities and land managers gain satisfactory agreements on access to land by providing guidance on technical lease agreements and related issues.

[www.communitylandadvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylandadvice.org.uk)

**Real life examples**

**The Royal Edinburgh Community Gardens** is a pilot project initiated by NHS Lothian to explore opportunities for temporary community gardening on NHS land. The gardens are located on three acres within the fifteen acre grounds at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital.

Community groups, hospital patients and staff and volunteers took part in the design and development of the site. The gardens are not comprised of individual allotments, but are shared areas providing a multi-use facility for growing, gardening, meeting space, learning space, relaxation areas, and opportunities for all age involvement.

[www.royaledinburghcommunitygardens.org.uk](http://www.royaledinburghcommunitygardens.org.uk)

**Gartnavel Royal Hospital**

In response to members of staff raising the issue of better use of the hospital greenspace, Sow and Grow Everywhere (SAGE) ‘pop-up’ growing cubes have been installed within the hospital’s greenspace.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde joined up with the urban food growing project SAGE to transform the NHS land into a vibrant, valued space for the whole community. The productive plots are tended by patients, staff and volunteers who are learning to grow fresh, seasonal vegetables.

**Belhaven NHS Community Garden** in Dunbar is being established as legacy to the care given to all those who have benefitted from the hospital. Sustaining Dunbar are leading the project which will consist of a sensory garden with plants and flowers which appeal to the senses of smell and touch. A vegetable garden will include raised beds so that patients can plant and harvest vegetables and soft fruit. An orchard with plum, apple and pear trees will be formed on land which is also used as a safe route to school by children from the Belhaven area.

[www.sustainingdunbar.org](http://www.sustainingdunbar.org)
What community growing approaches will work here?

> Container planting
> Edible landscapes
> Fruit trees as street trees
> Vertical growing

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Almost every high street and town centre in Scotland has containers and planters with flowers and quite a few have street trees and flowerbeds. So the infrastructure for growing food is already there!

If the planters or beds were used for herbs and vegetables instead of, or as well as, flowers and if we planted apple trees as street trees it would take food growing beyond the allotment and community garden right into the places we use every day.

Making it happen

There is an emerging trend for growing food in these sorts of spaces. Some Scottish Councils are using their formal planters and flower beds to show that vegetables can be as attractive as flowers and to generate interest in community growing.

Local business and shops could ‘adopt’ a planter for food growing and their employees could use the produce.

If containers and planters are not available, ‘vertical growing’ might be worth exploring.

Where town centre developments are happening there may be an opportunity to influence plans and secure the inclusion of growing spaces in the development master plan.

A partnership between the council and a local charity could be a good opportunity to ensure that food grown in the high street and town centre is harvested and used locally, for example, in a day centre or to support the homeless.

Promote healthy eating by encouraging the public to take produce as they walk by. This could be linked to urban foraging walks which would inform the public about what they can pick and what it can be used for.

Things to consider

There is some concern about using flower beds and planters near or alongside busy roads because the pollution from vehicle exhausts could contaminate the soil and/or produce.

The department of Public Health in Toronto has developed a guide for people who want to start an urban garden and need more information about the safety of their soil. It will help identify the ‘risk’ level of a site and recommend actions for soil testing and reducing exposure to urban soil contaminants.

There may also be concerns that the planters and bedding areas would suffer from theft or damage. This has not been a significant problem in areas where edible landscapes have been tried out.
Food growing is often thought of as untidy and unsightly and quite the opposite of what you would like in your town centre. It is important to clearly communicate to the public and Council officers and councillors why planters and flower beds are being used in this way, the benefits of doing so and that changing how these spaces are used and managed can be cost effective and still create very attractive displays.

Who can help?

There may be a local Council greenspace department who can help, or a voluntary local greenspace trust or group who will offer support and advice in your area. You can get details from Council websites or greenspace scotland.

www.greenspacescotland.org.uk

A number of local Transition Town initiatives and Climate Challenge Fund groups and projects are developing local food growing plans which may support this idea.

www.transitionscotland.org
http://ccf.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/

Real life examples

Edible Borders, Stirling

Stirling Council’s Land Services team transformed seven city garden sites by planting a collection of vegetables, herbs and annual bedding.

The project provided a learning opportunity for three Modern Day Apprentices who followed the journey of the Edible Borders from seed to harvest.

www.goingcarbonneutralstirling.org.uk

EATS Project, Fife

Fife Council is transforming public planting spaces in the Kirkcaldy area. The project Edible and Tasty Spaces (EATS) is turning public planting beds into a seasonal mix of bedding, herb and vegetable plants, in partnership with the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH).

The Council’s Leisure & Cultural Services changed two flower beds in Kirkcaldy in 2012. Flower, herbs and vegetables were maintained by SAMH volunteers. Signs were installed at the two beds welcoming people to harvest the produce. Vegetables were also given to Fife Community Food Project and distributed to community food groups.

EATS expanded in 2013 to eight beds in Kirkcaldy and Greener Kirkcaldy volunteers are now involved. Markinch Environment Action Group are also establishing EATS in their village and West Lothian Council are trialling EATS in Broxburn.

http://fifeeats.wordpress.com/
What community growing approaches will work here?

- Allotments
- Community gardens
- Community market gardens
- Community orchards
- Community supported agriculture
- Edible borders (hedges)

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Making it happen

Many sites and spaces in historic estates will work well as growing spaces. Some food growing infrastructure may already exist, e.g. old growing beds and green houses. It can be a mutually beneficial relationship – the community gets space to grow and the owner gets help in looking after and improving the estate.

A strong, long term relationship between the local community group or organisation and the owner or landlord will help.

Things to consider

Sites may be less accessible. They may be on the edge of town or in the countryside, and not well-served by public transport. Where private land is involved access may also be an issue if the site is not immediately accessible from a public road.

On-site services such as water and drainage may be an issue in more rural locations.

There may not be an interested community nearby to make community growing feasible.

There may be planning constraints and local objections to changing sites of local and national heritage importance and value. There may also be issues around historic and listed building status and policy.

It may be more challenging to gain funding for projects on private land. Community lease or ownership may be an option, but private landowners may be reluctant.

Landowners may have the advantage of access to an estate factor or agent, together with solicitor or other legal advice. Whereas a community group may have limited background knowledge or access to legal support.

The landowner may have longer term plans for the land and may wish to be able to get it back for another use.
Local Conservation officers or Planning departments can provide advice about re-using, for example, a walled garden or historic greenhouse. They can also provide guidance about where consent may be needed. For listed buildings advice and advice on use of land within or adjacent to conservation areas, local Council officers (Conservation Officer, Tree Officer or Planning Officer) can offer support including when consents may be required.

**Real life examples**

**Heal the Earth Ayrshire** is delivering a 10 year community project to grow organic food in the previously un-used walled garden at Dean Castle Country Park in Kilmarnock. The walled garden, neglected for over a century, is being developed with a sense of community sharing both the creation and care of the garden. The community area has communal beds, fruit trees and bushes, seating and a wildlife pond. Garden users are encouraged to contribute to the community area in addition to their own individual space.

[www.healtheearthayrshire.org.uk](http://www.healtheearthayrshire.org.uk)

**Amisfield Walled Garden** on the outskirts of Haddington is being developed by the Amisfield Preservation Trust. It aims to preserve the garden and buildings and cultivate and develop it for the public and local community.

[www.amisfield.org.uk](http://www.amisfield.org.uk)

**Perth Walled Garden** is part of PKAVS Mental Wellbeing Services. Set in a Victorian walled garden it aids the recovery of service users through the provision of meaningful activity including horticulture. It provides training in different trades and skills, helps service users gain qualifications and increases their employment prospects.


**The Lost Garden of Penicuik**

The Penicuik Community Development Trust began a 30 year renewable lease in 2012 on the Penicuik Estate Walled Garden. It is the first step in their vision for food production and garden restoration.

[www.makers.org.uk/penicuik/food](http://www.makers.org.uk/penicuik/food)
What community growing approaches will work here?

> Grow your own
> Landshare
> Abundance and ‘responsible scrumping’
> Virtual orchards

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

“Some hae meat and cannae eat. Some wad eat that want it”

It’s the same with gardens really! A lot of people grow their own fruit and vegetables in their gardens and in some cases they end up with too much produce.

Some people would like to grow their own fruit and vegetables, but have nowhere to do it. Whilst others have space in their garden that they are not able to maintain.

Allotment waiting lists are long and community growing spaces are not easy to come by either. By thinking of individual gardens as potential growing spaces (not necessarily looked after by individual gardeners) we may be able to expand the space available for food growing.

Making it happen

Not everyone with a garden would necessarily think about it as a place for growing food. Some people may need a bit of help and support from a community gardener to get started. In some areas the local community centre or community growing project provides support like this.

Sharing of individual gardens, and the produce from them, happens informally in many communities.

A local community garden share project could bring together people who would like to grow their own, but have nowhere to do it, with others who are prepared to share a part of their garden or could help in some way.

A project like this has the potential to bring different generations together and ensure that older people who are not able to maintain their gardens get some help. It may also help decrease the isolation of some older citizens if others drop in for a cup of tea and a chat when gardening.

The concepts of ‘abundance’ and ‘responsible scrumping’ also fit with the idea of using individual gardens for community growing. Responsible scrumpers and abundance groups locate, pick and use surplus or unwanted fruit from trees and orchards. In some cases networks are set up so that some of the produce, for example in the shape of jam, makes it back to the grower of the fruit. In other cases the abundant fruit is redistributed to charities.

If there is not an obvious or accessible space in your neighbourhood to establish a community orchard setting up a ‘virtual orchard’ could be a way forward. This involves planting fruit trees and bushes in individual gardens, with agreement from the community and garden owners to share the fruit and the harvest of it. In this way a community orchard can still be created.
Things to consider

Initially the idea of sharing your private garden with strangers might be alien to a lot of people. Be aware that not everyone will want to take part. Start small and advertise the positive stories locally.

Make sure agreements are in place which protect both the growers and the garden owners. Some neighbourhoods have a lot of absentee landlords and gardens which are left unmanaged. However tempting it might be to use these gardens for growing it is very important that permission from the landlord is obtained first.

In communities where there is a high resident turn over it may be harder to establish community growing initiatives that involve or focus on use of individual gardens.

Who can help?

Landshare brings together those who have land to share with those who need land for cultivating food. Landshare has developed the 'landshare toolkit' with information, guides and useful contacts to help start local schemes.

www.landshare.net

Real life examples

A virtual orchard in Callander – 83 fruit trees were distributed to people’s private gardens to form a virtual orchard for the benefit of wildlife and local fruit production.

www.callandercdt.org.uk/proj-climate.html

Abundance Edinburgh aims to collect surplus fruit grown in the city and put it to good use. The network plans to harvest this abundant food and redistribute it to local charities.

www.abundanceedinburgh.com

At the Concrete Garden, Glasgow a community gardener is employed to help people begin to grow in their tenement front gardens, window sills and verandas. The project hopes to create a ‘domino effect’ of people growing food at home.

www.facebook.com/theconcretegarden

The vision of the Killearn Growers cooperative is to share knowledge, resources and crops with each other. Their growing plots are back gardens – some of them in landshare arrangements. Membership is made up of singles, couples and families. Novice and experienced growers are all included in the group.

www.killearngrowers.org

Edinburgh Garden Partners support older people or people with disabilities to get help with maintaining and cultivating their gardens.

www.edinburghgardenpartners.org.uk
What community growing approaches will work here?
> Allotments
> Community gardens
> Community orchards
> Edible landscapes

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Our public parks and gardens are sometimes described as the green lungs of cities. They are used by large sections of society for a variety of purposes: exercise, play, relaxation, socialising and active travel. Is it possible to add ‘food growing’ to the list?

There are some parks and gardens which might be a bit past their sell by date and in need of new investment and community involvement. Creating a new community garden or an allotment site may be a way of re-engaging local people with their park. Opportunities to grow-your-own might also attract people who haven’t used the park or garden previously.

Making it happen

The Council might be interested in leasing an under-used area in the park to a local community project group for food growing.

Councils need to reduce maintenance costs and so community leasing may be supported if the community is willing and able to adopt the ground for food growing.

The Council may also be considering changes to the management regime of parks and gardens. Growing vegetables and herbs, instead of rose bushes and annual plants in flowerbeds and planters, might fit with their plans.

Training opportunities could be provided and expanded to include food growing for horticultural staff, trainees and placements within the Council and through local employment schemes.

Things to consider

A lot of parks have ‘Friends of groups’ or community councils who take a keen interest in the running of the park. It is important to make sure they are involved in any plans for community growing.

Some Councils have outside contractors maintaining the parks. You may need to consider how this will work with community growing activities on some of the spaces they look after.

Public perception of how the park is managed may change. Food growing is often associated with negative perceptions of allotment sites being untidy and unsightly. Communication will be needed about what is happening and why.
Who can help?

**Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens** supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other greenspaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.

[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)

**Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society** facilitate and support allotment community growing. Prime mover in supporting new sites and existing associations across Scotland.

[www.sags.org.uk](http://www.sags.org.uk)

**Scottish Orchards** help people develop their own community orchards. They can help schools, community groups, councils, farmers, landowners and companies.

[www.scottishorchards.com](http://www.scottishorchards.com)

Your **Council parks department**. There may also be a Council greenspace department or a local greenspace trust or group who offer support and advice in your area. Details from Council websites or greenspace scotland.

[www.greenspacescotland.org.uk](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk)

Real life examples

The **Masterplan for Ladywell Park in Stirling** has community growing and planting as one of its key proposals. The plans include introducing bulb areas through community planting, establishing community food growing sites and creating a community orchard.

The **Rose Garden in Gorbals, Glasgow** hosts a public orchard created in 2004 as part of an arts programme for the area. The artist wanted to create something which would be an on-going focus for community involvement. A group of volunteers maintain the orchard which is a reinstatement of a medieval orchard lost over 200 years ago.

The **Beveridge Park Development Group**, Fife Diet and Fife Council have developed a proposal for a food and wildlife garden in Beveridge Park. The vision is that the ‘Kaleyard’ will be a community space for workshops, events and regular growing activities to inspire the families and local people using Beveridge Park.


The **Go Greener community orchard** in Rouken Glen Park, East Renfrewshire has seen more than 100 apple trees planted next to the park’s Walled Garden and benches have been installed so that visitors can enjoy it.

The orchard, set out in a fan shape to resemble a giant tree from above, was developed by Go Greener, East Renfrewshire’s community environmental champions with support from East Renfrewshire Council and the Commonwealth Orchard.

[www.facebook.com/gogreenerorg](http://www.facebook.com/gogreenerorg)
What community growing approaches will work here?

> Community gardens
> Community orchards
> Edible borders
> Nectar bars

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

The green and public spaces in and around housing estates and residential developments (both old and new, public and private sector) are often significant in size and are close to people's homes. They include landscaped areas which provide both visual amenity and a space for a variety of informal or social activities such as kickabouts.

In many areas, these spaces consist of large areas of mown grassland with limited use or management beyond the provision of a landscape setting for housing.

In new residential developments there may be opportunities to influence the provision of growing spaces through the local planning system and the Open Space Strategy. Raising awareness and engaging with Council officers and elected members about the need for new growing spaces could help to influence future developments to ensure they incorporate growing spaces or contribute to the provision of them locally.

Community ownership might be an option for community groups or organisations that are ‘ready’. This usually involves the lease of a space or transfer of ownership on a permanent or temporary basis. This involves the group taking on some or all of the management responsibility. It could also open up new funding sources.

Making it happen

The community is on the doorstep – they are a potential source of volunteers and skills. Involving them will mean that any growing space created is more likely to be cared for and looked after. Consider creating a ‘social space’ which appeals to more people. This might lead to more people becoming involved.

Growing spaces will be well ‘overlooked’ and potentially more secure and safe from vandalism.

In areas where housing associations operate there may be opportunities to tap into their ‘Wider Role’ agenda to get support (both developmental and funding) for establishing community growing sites.

Things to consider

The support and involvement of the local community and residents is key. There may be people with horticultural skills to share.

Generating local support and interest is vital to ensure the growing spaces will be used and looked after, meaning that this role does not fall to just a few ‘usual suspects’.
In private residential areas it may be more difficult to gain consensus and agreement about changing or re-using spaces for community growing. Who owns or maintains the space now? Is there a factor or property agency that needs to be involved and consulted? It may be more challenging to engage with a private developer or factor.

In seeking the provision of new growing spaces in residential developments there may be a need to influence council officers to ‘switch them on’ to the idea of community growing.

Community ownership may be too big a commitment for some local groups or organisations. They may not yet have the capacity or participation levels required to be able to do this.

It will be important to consider future maintenance and upkeep. Who will provide this? Will the organisation or department who currently manages the greenspace take on this role? Will it incur extra costs? Who will pay for it?

Who can help?

Community Growing Solutions supports communities and organisations to develop and deliver growing and food related projects across Scotland.

www.communitygrowingsolutions.co.uk

Edible Estates aims to support communities to transform the greenspaces within social housing estates into beautiful, enjoyable and edible landscapes.

www.edibleestates.co.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other greenspaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.

www.farmgarden.org.uk

Scottish Orchards help people develop their own community orchards. They can help schools, community groups, councils, farmers, landowners and companies.

www.scottishorchards.com

There may be a local Council greenspace department or a local greenspace trust or group who offer support and advice in your area. Details from Council websites or greenspace scotland.

www.greenspacescotland.org.uk

Real life examples

Lochend Secret Garden is a community food growing project in the middle of a former council estate in East Edinburgh. It provides growing spaces for 50 local residents, a community shed, accessible beds for those with accessibility issues and Scotland’s longest forest garden around the site.

www.edibleestates.co.uk/projects/lochend/

The Bountiful Buckhaven Community Growing Space occupies the site of a former play park. The site now hosts a 130 tree orchard, four allotments (with a community plot) and a poly tunnel.

bountifulbuckhaven.wordpress.com/

Forth Community Food Growing Initiative is working with local residents and stakeholders in Wardieburn, North Edinburgh to regenerate four community greenspaces. This is one of several Edible Estates projects in council estates which include setting up edible landscaping initiatives.

www.edibleestates.co.uk/neighbourhoods/wardieburn/
What community growing approaches will work here?

> Allotments
> Community gardens
> Community orchards
> Raised beds

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

The grounds of primary and secondary schools could be available to the wider community for growing.

Many schools are surrounded by large green areas and communal spaces that are already well used as places for relaxation, socialising and physical activity.

A lot of schools have planted beds at the front of the buildings which could be used as growing space.

Making it happen

A growing project on school grounds could be a great way to involve children, parents and grandparents in the school both outwith and within school hours.

The project could potentially involve people who are not traditionally involved with the local school and bring out hidden knowledge and skills.

Community growing spaces will help children develop food growing skills and build their awareness of healthy eating.

School growing spaces fit with the curriculum for excellence as outdoor learning spaces for science, art and maths, as well as supporting the development of food growing skills.

For schools wanting to obtain a Green Flag or become Eco-schools, a growing space nearby would be ideal.

Things to consider

Schools and groups interested in taking forward community growing in school grounds will need to do a risk assessment and check the school’s Health and Safety, and other relevant policies, in relation to child safety.

You will need to find out if people from the local community are required to have a police check in order to allow them to make use of spaces within school grounds.

Access might be an issue you need to consider. Site safety and vandalism may be a problem if spaces are open 24 hours a day with no limitations on access.

The opposite may also be a challenge – if there is no access to school grounds outwith school hours and in holidays.

The ideal would be a space that is accessible both from the school and from the community. This means it would be possible to have summer clubs and drop-in sessions for school age children during the holidays to maintain the beds and plots.

It’s important to think carefully about what to plant if school children are to get the most out of a growing space within term time. For example, when will crops be harvested and will children will be around during this time?

Some Councils have outside contractors maintaining the school grounds – you need to consider how this would fit with community growing activities on some of the space.
Who can help?

Grounds for Learning supports outdoor learning and play and support and advise schools on transforming their outdoor spaces. They offer advisory visits to schools.
www.ltl.org.uk/scotland

Fruitful schools aim is to make it easy and fun for pupils, teachers, parents and friends to plant fruit trees and get growing. Fruitful Schools can provide fruit trees, planting information, inspiration and support.
www.fruitfulschools.com

Eco-Schools is an international initiative designed to encourage whole-school action for the environment. One of the ten topics that schools can choose from when implementing their Eco-Schools work is ‘Food and the environment’.
www.ecoschoolsscotland.org

The Royal Highland Education Trust works to support schools in teaching Scottish schoolchildren about food, farming and the countryside.
www.rhet.org.uk/

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other greenspaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.
www.farmgarden.org.uk

Real life examples

The Grow Green with Glasgow’s East End project run by Playbusters is involved in a community garden behind St. Mungo’s High School. The school, local residents and organisations all have plots. During the holidays when the school’s plot is unattended it is watered by people tending to their own plots.
www.playbusters.org.uk/articles/article.php?articleID=101

Rothesay Joint Campus has a playground that is shared by children from age 3 to 18. The school garden is made of raised beds and planters. Each primary class is allocated its own bed and fruit trees are grown along the fence. The school kitchens use any produce that is given to them.

A common problem with school gardens is maintenance over the summer holidays. The school successfully manages this by creating a rota for pupils and parents. Helpers are allowed to take home the day’s fresh produce as a reward.

The secondary school runs a Rural Skills course; these students are able to help out with some of the more physically demanding tasks in the garden.

This briefing note is part of the Our Growing Community resource by greenspace scotland, 2013
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greenspace scotland is a registered Scottish Charity (No. SC034078) and a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland (No. 236105)
Sheltered housing and care home facilities often have gardens and greenspaces for residents to use and enjoy. In some places these facilities already provide an attractive and valued outdoor resource for residents, staff and visitors. In others the quality and functionality of these areas is more limited.

All aspects of gardens and gardening offer a range therapeutic and health benefits; providing a refuge from the home or care environment, access to fresh air, physical activity and social space. Residents, staff and visitors are all potential beneficiaries and a source of support for looking after and using growing spaces.

Making it happen

The opportunities for community growing to add value to the quality of life of residents is immense.

Introducing food growing as an activity in existing gardens means that people will have the opportunity to interact with their garden and be more active. Taking part in growing activities will support interaction and socialising between residents and with people from the wider community and offer a way to reduce isolation.

In facilities where the quality of the outdoor space is poor, developing a community growing project could be one way of transforming the space and bringing it into use for residents and the wider community.

Involving residents early and create a sense of ownership of the garden or growing space. There may be some residents who are very interested in gardening and a number may have ‘hidden’ gardening and growing skills they would like to use again. Residents with existing skills and interest could help engage and involve other residents and share their skills with them.

Integrate different age groups and interests. Engage and involve local volunteers and groups from the community in developing, looking after and using the space. Involving other groups could help with maintaining the space.

Identify and promote health and wellbeing benefits to key people including facility managers, staff and grounds keepers.

Things to consider

Support will be needed from strategic decision makers, staff and facility managers.

The care service operator or sheltered housing manager may be concerned about any additional costs arising from the creation and management of growing spaces.

Staff capacity to support and be involved in developing or looking after a growing space, or in supporting residents to be involved in it, could be an issue. Their primary role will be to deliver care support and so staff availability for activities outwith this might be limited. There may also be concern about the interruption of care for residents.
Staff might be worried about their ability to support a growing project or space. If they do not garden or know how to grow food they might lack the confidence to get involved or support a project, even if they are interested and able to contribute their time.

The housing or care home facility and grounds or gardens might only be open to residents, their visitors and staff. This may impact in the ability to involve the wider community. Police disclosure checks may also be required.

**Who can help?**

**Trellis Scotland** supports communities and health professionals in many NHS estates to develop gardens and garden activities through a range of free or low cost advice, support, training and good practice exchange services. They can share the combined experience of over 200 therapeutic gardening projects throughout Scotland.

Trellis Scotland are building and designing gardens with food growing spaces in a number of Scottish hospitals. They have lots of advice on adaptive design, making projects sustainable and getting people involved.

[www.trellisscotland.org.uk](http://www.trellisscotland.org.uk)

**Gardening Leave** helps troubled Armed Forces veterans by tending to their invisible wounds of conflict using horticultural therapy and growing fruit and vegetables in a walled garden. The charity supports veterans on their journey to good health and transition to civilian life.

[www.gardeningleave.org](http://www.gardeningleave.org)

**Real life examples**

**Hawthorn Gardens** in Loanhead were developed with the staff and elderly residents of Trust Housing Association. The project transformed an unused, hard surfaced area within a sheltered housing complex into a community garden with raised beds and a greenhouse. Residents were supported in gaining knowledge and skills to garden and grow food. Community gardening activities have helped to improve their health and wellbeing through increasing their mobility.


The **Thistle Foundation Community Garden** in Craigmillar was a wasted and under-used space. Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust worked with staff, trainees and volunteers to transform it. It now supplies fruit and vegetables to the café, serves as a location for outdoor courses and therapy and has helped develop links with the wider Craigmillar community who have access to the grounds.


This briefing note is part of the Our Growing Community resource by greenspace scotland, 2013

Production of this resource was supported by Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society.
greenspace scotland is a registered Scottish Charity (No. SC034078) and a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland (No. 236105)
What community growing approaches will work here?

- Allotments (student and staff plots)
- Beekeeping
- Community gardens
- Community orchards
- Edible landscapes

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

The grounds of educational establishments could be made available to the wider community for growing.

Many have large green campuses or civic and communal spaces that are already well used as places for relaxation, socialising and physical activity.

Making it happen

Look for a student body or organisation which is already involved in growing or greenspace projects. This may offer new opportunities for community uses of university land and the possibility of working with students and staff to develop a growing space.

Depending on the courses on offer at the campus some staff and students may have horticultural skills, expertise and guidance to tap into and they may be looking for new opportunities to build their practical horticultural experience.

Community growing spaces could also become outdoor learning spaces.

Things to consider

It will be important to have campus estate managers and caretakers on board. Find supporters at different management levels to make it easier to overcome red tape. You may need to reassure and promote the benefits to people who are less ‘switched on’ to community growing.

The institution may have internal Health and Safety or other policies which will impact on undertaking community growing activities. Site safety and vandalism may need to be considered if spaces are open to the public. Every University or College is different and while there might be ‘red tape’ one year it might be completely different the following year.

Student turnover can cause challenges to site sustainability and maintenance (e.g. enthusiastic growers may move on and not be replaced) but there are ways to mitigate this: maintaining a programme of events or redesigning areas regularly will help to keep and generate interest. Staff support and involvement will help ensure continuity.

Long student holiday periods may also cause problems because it means a lack of student involvement at various times of year. Opening up growing spaces to the wider community and developing them in partnership with local groups and organisations will lessen the impact of this seasonal drop-off of student involvement.
Who can help?

Community Growing Solutions supports communities and organisations to develop and deliver growing based and food related projects across Scotland.

www.communitygrowingsolutions.co.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other greenspaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.

www.farmgarden.org.uk

National Union of Students

Fresher Freshers has supported student groups in seven student unions over three years to develop their own food growing schemes to provide fresh, healthy produce on campus.


People and Planet support student activism and global citizenship.

www.peopleandplanet.org

Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society facilitate and support allotment community growing. They are the prime mover in supporting new sites and existing associations across Scotland.

www.sags.org.uk

Scottish Orchards help people develop their own community orchards. They can help schools, community groups, councils, farmers, landowners and companies.

www.scottishorchards.com

Transition Scotland has details of university Transition groups.

www.transitionscotland.org

Milton Road Community Garden at the Edinburgh College Milton campus aims to provide easier access to fresh vegetables and fruit for students, members of staff and the community around the College.

Garden users can share space (in groups of 3 or 4) to grow their own fruit and vegetables or come along as volunteers and work on the communal growing spaces.


In Fife, a partnership between Elmwood College and Fife Council saw the development of community allotments within the College estate and elsewhere

University of Edinburgh Allotment and Permaculture Society runs a student and staff allotment site.

www.allotmentandpermaculturesociety.weebly.com

Real life examples

The University of Edinburgh Apiary Project offers bee and bee-related support services to the University of Edinburgh. It also has a role in education, both of staff and students within the University, and further afield, in conjunction with local beekeeping associations and other educational organisations.

www.bees.ed.ac.uk
What community growing approaches will work here?

> Container growing
> Raised beds
> Staff allotments
> Staff orchard

For more information on growing approaches see the Community Growing Approaches Overview.

Work place growing plots have been established in a number of settings in Scotland and the UK.

These spaces offer growing opportunities for a workforce ‘community’ but are generally not available to the wider community.

Making it happen

The idea of work place growing projects could be ‘sold’ to employers on the evidence of the benefits to their staff: time out from busy work environments, stress relief and mental wellbeing, physical health benefits and team building.

Simply having a lunch and break area in the garden would also help to provide these benefits.

Work places do not necessarily need large outdoor spaces. Spaces inside offices such as windowsills, large windows or atriums, which have natural light, could also be used.

Partnering with a local community group or local residents who want space to grow-their-own could help with upkeep and maintenance.

Things to consider

Make sure the growing space is well maintained and looked after. Are enough staff interested in maintaining and keeping the space tidy? Some employers might worry about it becoming scruffy and visually unattractive.

The growing space will need to be easily accessible and not overwhelming in size so that cultivating and looking after it can be broken into small tasks to fit into lunch breaks and after work. This is even more important if the space is not accessible to the staff after working hours or on the weekend.

Think about staff holidays and staff turnover. What happens to the growing area if a lot of the people who look after it are on holiday or if there is a high staff turnover?
Who can help?

Community Growing Solutions supports communities and organisations to develop and deliver growing based and food related projects across Scotland.

www.communitygrowingsolutions.co.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other greenspaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.

www.farmgarden.org.uk

Landshare brings together those who have land to share with those who need land for cultivating food.

www.landshare.net

Scottish Orchards help people develop their own community orchards. They can help schools, community groups, councils, farmers, landowners and companies.

www.scottishorchards.com

There may be a Council greenspace department who can help, or a voluntary local greenspace trust or group who will offer support and advice in your area. You can get details from Council websites or greenspace scotland.

www.greenspacescotland.org.uk

Real life examples

Workplace growing plots have been established in a number of settings elsewhere in the UK and in Scotland, for example, at the offices of the Central Scotland Forest Trust. Other examples include:

Manchester Airport has given allotments to more than 100 employees on a site located within a few hundred yards of the main runway. The field was ploughed professionally by the airport and facilities provided for the workers. Courses are provided to help get people started and they hope the project will promote sustainability, healthy living and wellbeing. Staff members are responsible for keeping their own land in order.

The Book People in Surrey have a workplace allotment which is used regularly by 15 members of staff. Its success means the scheme is to be rolled out to its other sites. Ted Smart, Founder of The Book People:

“We decided to start our allotment scheme... by providing all the staff at our Godalming site with space in which to grow. It’s a pleasure to see people leaving their desks at lunch time to tend their pumpkins or courgettes and as one employee said to me... In terms of supporting your staff I can’t recommend growing at work highly enough.”

Stormont Estate Workplace Allotment project aims to provide Northern Ireland Civil Service staff based within the Stormont Estate the opportunity to participate in a healthy, outdoor, recreational activity during their own time. 25 individual plots and one community garden training plot have been created. The plots are about 40 square metres in size and are accessible throughout the week into the evenings, all year round. Initially launched as a pilot exercise it is hoped that further opportunities will be developed across other public sector workplaces.

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Other places to grow food

Balconies and terraces
- Container planting
- Grow-your-own
- Vertical growing

Growing on balconies and terraces is more about creating a community of food growers, who use these (generally) private spaces. Container planting means that different crops can be grown to suit both the individual and the physical conditions.

Roadside verges and underpasses
- Container planting
- DIY seed planting
- Edible landscapes

These are everyday spaces not usually thought of as places to grow food. There are challenges to growing food at the roadside. Roadside verges can suffer from toxic soil due to over-salting in the wintertime, but it is possible to use crops which don’t take up contaminants. The use of containers and planters a certain distance from the road is another way of dealing with this issue.

The safety of underpasses in terms of anti-social behaviour and isolation, as well as safety on roads because of traffic are key factors to consider.

Golf Courses
- Allotments
- Container planting
- Edible hedges
- ‘In the rough’
- Raised beds

Golf courses and their surroundings could be great places for community food growing. Some golf courses have seen falling membership and so it may be possible to establish new allotments on surplus land. Raised beds at the club house could provide ‘Pick Your Own’ produce for club members or supply vegetables to the Club restaurant.

Rail and bus stations
- ‘Adopt a station’
- Container planting
- Edible landscapes

Many train and bus stations have planters and containers which could be used for food growing. Some stations also have derelict and vacant grounds which could be used.

A local growing group could ‘adopt a station’. Due to the amount of people who use train and bus stations daily, creating an ‘edible station’ has the potential to inspire and introduce the concept of grow-your-own to a lot of people. Scotrail has an ‘adopt a station’ scheme that finds community or start-up uses for vacant accommodation at their stations. More than one hundred stations have already been adopted by volunteer gardeners.

www.scotrail.co.uk/content/adopt-station
Rooftops

> Beekeeping and nectar bars
> Container planting
> Edible green roofs

Where space on the ground is hard to find, roof top gardens are an emerging possibility for growing food. They are high up and so pollution from cars is less of an issue and if bees are kept there they won’t directly affect people.

Any roof must first be investigated to check it is suitable for growing food. Work may be needed to ensure that it has the capacity to bear the extra weight of soil, infrastructure, and people. Health and safety requirements must be investigated and adhered to e.g. ensuring access routes and facilities and site structures, such as fenced off roof edges, are compliant.

It is possible to use containers and planters on flat areas to grow vegetables and herbs. Another option is to construct an ‘edible green roof’ where the roof itself becomes the garden. If a flat roof has the loading capability it could also be an ideal spot for a community garden.

Green roofs, even if not used for growing vegetables, are better for urban wildlife than traditional roofing methods. Flowering plants that attract bees and insects could be planted.

www.livingroofs.org

Cemeteries and church yards

> Edible borders
> Fruit trees and orchards
> Raised beds

There may be spaces in cemeteries and church yards which could be used for growing fruit, vegetables and herbs. Growing directly into the ground of a church yard may not be appropriate if it is or has ever been used for burials. Raised beds could be an alternative.

A corner of the cemetery or church yard might be an ideal spot for an orchard. If benches and paths are also installed this could become a space of calm and reflection for visitors.

The Grassmarket Community Project has planted over 200 medicinal and culinary herbs in Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh.

www.grassmarketcommunityproject.co.uk/herb-garden

Ministry of Defence sites

> Allotments
> Beekeeping
> Community market gardens
> Community orchards
> Community supported agriculture
> Community small holdings
> Raised beds

The Ministry of Defence operates a number of barracks across Scotland. The review of future basing needs means that some may become surplus to requirements.

The size of these sites means that they could provide significant areas of new community growing spaces.

Site contamination may be an issue which would require investigation.

Comrie Development Trust bought the Cultybraggan Camp in 2007. Their work to develop it as a community asset has included the creation of 30 allotments.

www.comriedevelopmenttrust.org.uk
More and more people in Scotland want to grow their own fruit and vegetables but land availability is a big challenge. This pack has been produced to help Scottish communities explore new places and more ways to grow their own food.

There are many spaces and places where food could be grown in our villages, towns and cities – we need to think more creatively about where these are and how they could be used for growing food. The information and materials in this pack will help you do this.

Use the pack to get your community growing everywhere... on the edge of the school playing field, in the flowerbeds outside the office, on that bit of derelict ground... Where will you grow?

This pack has been produced by greenspace scotland

greenspace scotland is a Scottish charity and social enterprise that works with a wide range of local and national partners to make sure that everyone has easy access to quality greenspaces close to where they live.

Production of this pack was supported by:

Scottish Government

‘Recipe for Success’ is Scotland’s National Food and Drink Policy for the 21st century. It builds on the food and drink revolution underway in Scotland and aims to deliver for everyone.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Food-Industry

Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society

The Society seeks to promote and support gardening and all aspects of horticulture in Scotland. Its members include both amateur and professional, generalists, specialists and those who simply like gardens and gardening.

www.rchs.co.uk

Scottish Natural Heritage

SNH works to care for the natural heritage – enabling people to enjoy it, helping people to understand and appreciate it, and supporting those who manage it. Their website provides information about gardening for wildlife.

www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/what-can-i-do/garden-for-wildlife/

We would also like to thank the many community growing experts and greenspace professionals who generously shared their knowledge and expertise. We would particularly like to acknowledge the members of the Grow Your Own Working Group. Check out their website for lots of useful information and contacts.

www.growyourownscotland.info

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