

# Grow Your Own Allotment Site



## **GALVANISING GRASSROOTS**

A Series of Guides for the Allotment Community

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Contributors: Members of Scottish Allotments and Gardeners Assoc. (SAGS)  
Consultant: Steven Tolson  
Design and Illustration: Emily Chappell  
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# INTRODUCTION

*"True freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation,  
and that is in the use of the earth."*

Gerrard Winstanley, 1652



Allotments are in demand. More than ever, people want to be part of the allotment community to experience the enjoyment of cultivating land, making new friends, sharing ideas, being out in the fresh air and keeping healthy.

Allotments are an integral part of society as relevant today as hundreds of years ago. Back in the 17th century 'The Diggers' challenged land ownership and demanded rights to cultivate. The quest for working the land for ordinary people's well-being and enjoyment has been an essential component of social history that is as relevant today as it was for Gerrard Winstanley's Diggers in 1649. With Scotland's Land Reform and Community Empowerment legislation providing further opportunities for communities to develop allotments, now is the time for people to "enjoy the earth".

On a typical Scottish allotment you will find energetic people both fulfilling their own capabilities and enjoying collective recreation with their families and friends. Allotments are places of equality and inclusivity without social, cultural or ethnic boundaries. Allotments are not just about growing things but can include ground for orchards, ponds, community huts and social gathering. They are places where people can choose to socialise or be places that provide therapeutic quiet contemplation.

A grassroots network of allotment action makers are coming together to respond to this growing tide of interest and this guide is intended to help an understanding of the purpose, benefit and operations of allotments as well as collectively galvanising and growing support to deliver more allotments for Scotland.

# THE BENEFITS OF ALLOTMENTS

Allotments provide a wide range of benefits not just to individuals but also collectively whether they are partners, families, friends or communities.

Growing and eating healthy fresh food is undoubtedly good for a person's health and this can be achieved all year round. But having a good diet is only one benefit from being an allotment member. Research has shown that growing things helps lower the risk of physical and mental ill-health. An allotment is for all ages and not a barrier for older people. It provides purpose and is an excellent platform for older people to pass on their wisdom and experience as well as providing companionship and participation in the art of gardening.



In many Scottish communities, allotments are springing up as a core function of local community action that provides beneficial use of land and acts as a conduit for creating a confident interacting community that further enhances people's capabilities, their well-being and sociability. Such benefits are highlighted in Wellhouse, east Glasgow where the community see their allotment as a chance to "grow people" as well as grow vegetables. The fantastic benefits arising from the empowered community of Wellhouse demonstrates that local action can instill purpose and confidence to enable people to achieve their own potential.

An allotment is a continual learning environment with people exchanging their experiences on a daily basis. This educational benefit frequently extends to new



allotment members who are looking for tutorage and mentoring to develop their own skills. Allotment learning experiences can start at an early age often with three generations working on a family plot. The process of inter-generational knowledge cements lifetime bonds and respect that can be applied in wider societal development. Formal education also has a role to play with some allotments having a plot dedicated to a school. Again, this educational benefit in food production, wider understanding of the environment and positive inter-actions with other plot holders can have a profound beneficial impact on younger people.

In addition to social benefits for individuals and communities, allotments also provide a purposeful role in bringing land into beneficial use. While land is generally regarded as scarce and its acquisition overly competitive and complex, experience shows that there are plenty of potential sites that can make suitable allotments. Such opportunities require individuals and communities to identify land, gain the support of the land owner and public authorities and feature in community action plans and the Council's local development plan. Allotments can make a very useful self-help community contribution to place regeneration, people's education and health and represent good value for the public purse.



Plot-holders are resourceful, being excellent at upcycling and making a valuable contribution towards mitigating climate change, significantly enhancing biodiversity and providing a habitat resource for wildlife. Allotments don't necessarily have to follow traditional patterns. In particular, in more dense places they can be creatively arranged and adapted to fit in all kinds of settings allowing our towns, cities and their occupiers to breathe and enjoy growing food.

# CASE STUDY #1

## Croftburn Allotments, Glasgow

### The Birth of an Idea

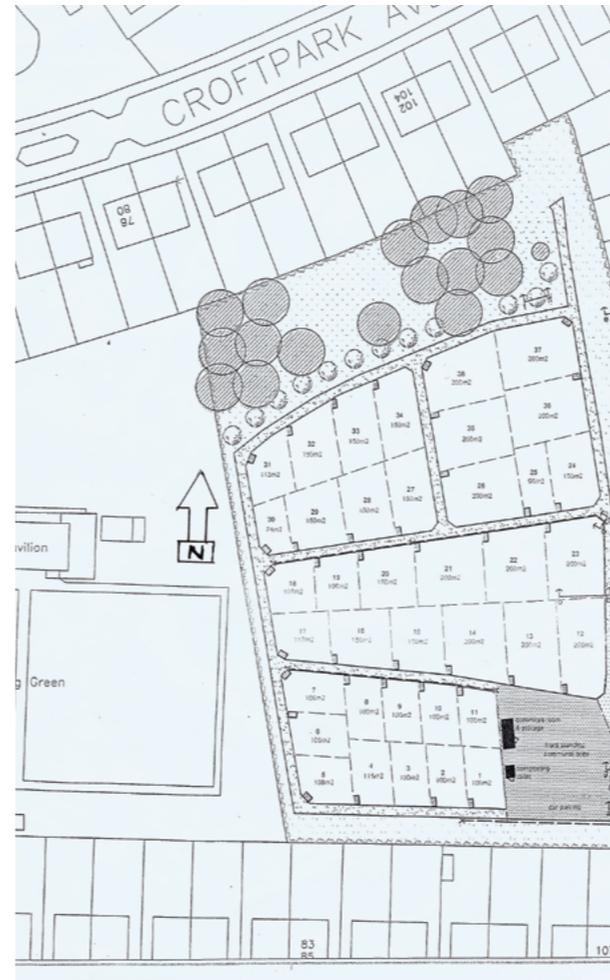
Croftburn Allotments is an example of an allotment being re-born. Like many other allotments that declined in the 1980s, this productive land owned by Glasgow City Council at Croftburn Drive on the south side of Glasgow fell into misuse becoming vacant and acting as a venue for un-neighbourly activity. Local residents were increasingly concerned about the inappropriate use of the land and approached their local councillor to seek ways of bringing back the land into a more positive use. Various proposals were considered such as sports pitches but some local residents rallied together to promote the resurrecting of the abandoned allotment so that local people could once more work the land for productive pleasure.



### Local Community Support

The success of the re-birth of the allotment has been down to local people building up community support through their Community Council and local Councillor. They were supported by Glasgow Allotments Federation representatives who attended early meetings and provided excellent practical advice organising fact finding visits to established sites, meetings with other plot holders and generally providing useful information. Federation support continues acting as a critical friend and partner in allotment's development.

Following well attended public meetings an agreement was reached to promote the ground for a new allotment. At the same time as the allotment was being promoted by the community, there was increasing city wide political support for encouraging investment in allotments in the city. Such investment brought about a new Allotments Officer being appointed by Glasgow City Council who had considerable experience in setting up and managing allotments and his support for Croftburn Allotments proved invaluable in getting the site established.



### Allotment Development Process

David Finlay, a local resident acting as a facilitator quickly established a team of enthusiasts who liaised with the Allotment Officer and through such a coalition of support helped to steer the proposal through the Planning process. Following planning consent, in September 2013 Glasgow City Council's Land Services organised the works for a 40 allotment plot site with huts and associated services and the site was handed over to the Allotment committee in November 2013.

### Plot Selection Process and Operations

The Allotment Committee held a meeting of members who were invited to participate in a ballot to select their plots. This selection process was done ahead of enabling works to allow members several months to expand their skills and their knowledge and to prepare for their first year of cultivation. Residents living next to the allotment welcomed the new allotment although it took a little time to secure the site, particularly from dogs who lived in the bordering homes and were accustomed to running freely from their back gardens into the area.

Due to the hard work and vision of a small committee, by the second year of operation the plots are firmly established and were operating well. A Facebook site was established to provide members the means of communication and their enthusiasm was transmitted to a wider audience within the Glasgow Allotments Forum.



**Developing and Sustaining Interest**

Having successfully promoted the re-birth of an allotment at Croftburn there was significant enthusiasm from local people to take up plots. However, experience shows that initial enthusiasm has to be tempered with some reality. The first winter brought bad weather and early appetites waned amongst perhaps some of the less experienced plot holders. While TV gardening programmes provide excellent exposure on what can be achieved they can paint an idealistic image of instant success without effort. Therefore, having faced a poor winter and growing difficulties, the Allotment had around 50% churn in the first year. This highlighted to the committee the need to develop ‘starter plots’ for allotment newcomers who could cut their teeth on a smaller introductory plot with support from more experienced allotment members. Those that experienced success could, if they wished, graduate to larger plots as they become available.

While the Wellhouse Allotment has seen the advantages of a school plot within their allotment, this has not been the case at Croftburn. The committee approached schools but none expressed interest. This was due to a combination of reasons including providing space within the curriculum and schools being more than a short walk from the site.

**A Secure Allotment**

Many allotments are, by necessity, surrounded by high fences which can give the perception of a secure establishment rather than a place of enjoyable fulfillment. How the fence is detailed will have a visual impact and message to neighbours and passers-by. Croftburn Allotment does not have high fences due to it being situated in ‘back land’ behind rear gardens of houses. However, the Allotment committee still has to maintain some security to avoid dogs straying onto plots. Being ‘back land’, high planting is avoided as the safety of individual plot holders is paramount.



**Collective Action**

No Allotment can be successful without having a strong active committee. The committee is operated through the efforts of around 6-8 highly committed activists. While there are formal responsibilities to address, the committee is anxious to maintain the social aspects of collective effort. There are rules and regulations to be followed but these are administered without being overly robust. Each plot holder is required to provide 6 hours per annum of time to help in common activity. While collective action is encouraged this did not extend to the sharing of huts which was found to be unsuccessful although an element of common sharing of tools is being explored. Fund raising has been successful in creating a new pond at the lower end of the allotment which has created a new habitat for wildlife and this acts as an educational resource and interest for younger and older people.

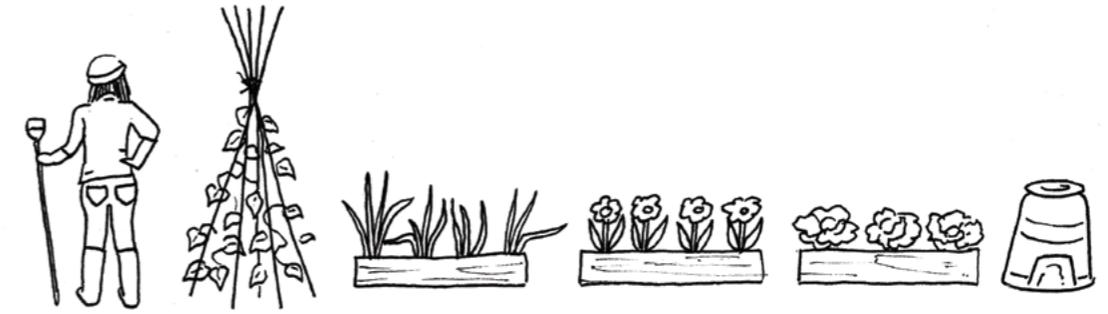




**Confidence and Benefits from Local Action**

While there has been challenges these have been managed and overcome by a supportive committee who are now planning further development and investment to their allotment. The local councillor, Margot Clark, who while not being an allotment member, was very supportive and in her role as councillor helped enable the delivery process to be achieved with reasonable speed. The momentum from the initial idea to getting the allotment established and extended is very impressive and serves as an exemplar of the benefit of local people exercising an enthusiastic determination to get something done with the support of their local elected representatives and officials within the Council.

There is no doubt that the re-birth of the Croftburn Allotments has made a positive addition to the area and now serves as a common bond of sociability and enjoyment for local residents.



# CASE STUDY #2

## Thistly Cross Allotments, East Lothian

### The Birth of an Idea

Thistly Cross Allotments came about from the efforts of a farmer landowner and his advisor, on a parcel of land that had little agricultural use following an improvement to the A1 Expressway between Dunbar and Edinburgh, which had cut off a section of ground from the farm between the railway line and the road. A steering group was established from Dunbar Allotments and Gardens Association who recognised its potential for an allotment.

### Plot Development

Members engaged with East Lothian Council's Planning officials to get a change of land use from that of agricultural to allotments. Gaining planning consent for this took some time and effort, (considering the underlying purpose was for the generation of food for consumption), but eventually consent was granted.

The allotment has 45 plots, each approximately 120sqm. The landowning farmer carried out enabling works erecting fencing with gates, a water supply, an area for car parking and several tons of stable manure and strawberry compost as soil conditioner. The site is well drained and is orientated to obtain good levels of sunshine. Being somewhat exposed the allotment required the creation of windbreaks. The end result has been that the allotment is capable of high yields. The farmer was a significant supporter of the ground being cultivated and was an effective co-operator in the development of the allotment.

### Community Support

While being ½ mile away from residential properties, local residents were generally in favour of the proposal and supportive in its subsequent operations.



### Plot Selection

In late June 2010 the first plots were let. By agreement with East Lothian Council, first refusal was offered to those on the Council's local allotment waiting list, with 20 out of 80 on the list taking up plots. The remaining plots were offered on a first-come, first-served basis. The site is now a fully occupied allotment with a waiting list of potential members.

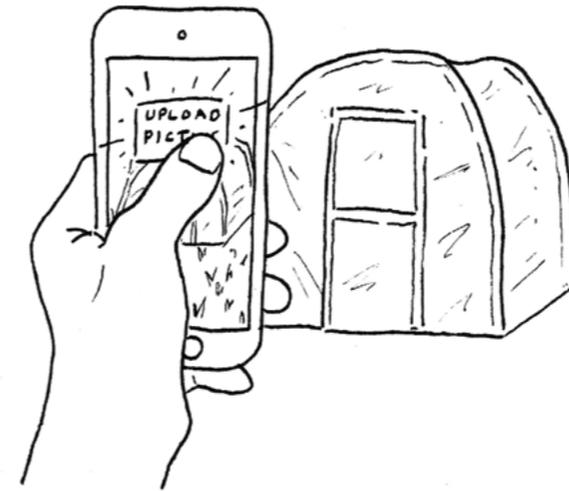


### Occupation Agreement

Plot holders occupy the plots under agricultural tenancy agreement and subject to a reasonable annual rental charge.

### Communication

The Allotment members with support from Dunbar Allotments and Gardens Association seek to maximise interest and social interaction through their own online forum. This was brought about by one of the members having skills and initiative in social media.



# CASE STUDY #3

## Wellhouse, Connect Community Trust, Glasgow



### The Birth of an Idea

Local people living in Wellhouse, Glasgow, a neighbourhood within Easterhouse, recognised that there were a growing number of people within their community, particularly men over 50 years, who were looking for a role and purpose in their lives to help overcome such issues as depression and generally looking for ways to escape their familiar way of life.

One difficult family experience gave focus to how a community can support people and how a garden and growing things can help change people's lives. One small raised bed became a place of retreat and solace that helped an individual cope at a challenging time and provided a sufficient clue about the therapeutic power that can be achieved from a garden. People in Wellhouse readily accepted that some people had lost their way in life and need to modify and transform the way they lived but they required a trigger to take a new direction.

From a range of conversations the idea of an allotment arose and representatives from Connect Community Trust, the local community body, came forward as champions and promoters for creating an allotment. One allotment holder said, "we see this as growing people as much as growing plants". It was this people focus that helped to re-energising lives, helping people to gain confidence and purpose from a new experience.

### Overcoming Perceptions

Many believed that allotments had a bad press, perceived as a 'men only' place with negative connotations from those seeing planting and cultivation as a counterpoint to their traditional reputation. It was believed that such perceptions had to be turned around by the community taking a 'self-help' approach which would offset the external labelling of being a dependent community. This was not just about an allotment proposal to grow things but the whole process of coming together helping to construct the project offered an opportunity for good collective experiences, an ability to work together as a team and help and support each other as friends.



### The Allotment Promoters and Realism

Eddie Andrews is a community council activist and pragmatist, a well-known person in the community with a reputation for making things happen. Eddie had a track record of getting projects moving. That track record was essential to obtain trust both inside the Community and with the Council. While Eddie was able to use his experience and network it needed fellow promoters, action makers and supporters who had skills and experience to make things happen. Eddie and his 10 promoters knew that Council budgets were declining but the focus had to be investing in people rather than objects. Many people were motivated to contribute and political endorsements were important. Local MPs and MSPs provided their support along with good inter-relationship working with Council officials who enabled processes to be achieved and ground preparation works to take place.





### Allotment as a Core Community Activity

The Wellhouse allotment is adjacent to the Connect Community Hub and at the core of the community. Allotment members recognised the importance of having events that opened up the allotment to the wider community and this impetus has now stimulated other communities within Easterhouse to want an allotment of their own. The Wellhouse Allotment is a place of informality with the community empowered to see the allotment as their place. The Council while recognising its duties trusts the Connect Community Trust to organise operations at the local level. Members recognised their collective action enabled a wide range of benefits introducing people to allotments and generally supporting them to gain experience, achieve their own capabilities and to share experiences. While everyone had their own plot and an ability to find their identifiable sanctuary the Wellhouse Allotment is about a common purpose and a shared experience.

The Wellhouse Allotment is about what works for the plot holders which means there isn't a precise rule book but things are worked out with a good champion and general consensus rather than dictat. Not all allotments can achieve decision making through general consensus and informality but with only 10 plots the Wellhouse allotment requires a champion to have an awareness of people's requirements, motivations and grievances and find agreement, understanding and resolution. The Wellhouse Allotment operations largely avoid rule books as power is mutually exercised and common sense practices are applied.

# CASE STUDY #4 Oakwell Allotment, Linlithgow

## Birth of an Idea

The Linlithgow and District Allotment Society (LADAS) was formed by a group of enthusiastic people in 2008 to campaign for a new allotment in and around Linlithgow. It took 3 years before the Oakwell Allotment was established on private ground following registering a proposal with West Lothian Council in September 2008. Despite some significant effort, the Council sites that were considered proved for a number of reasons to be unsuitable.

## Land Agreement

A private landowner agreed to lease to the Society just over 1 hectare of ground for 76 plots with each plot being 100sqm. The land had previously been used for arable crops.

## Allotment Development

The Society realised that allotments in order to thrive and survive should be based on sustainable principles - caring for the environment for example with areas for biodiversity; caring for the plot-holders and engaging with the local community. The Society saw the benefit of a communal hut which encourages social interaction through events and other activities.

A planning application was made for a change of use to an allotment in November 2010 and received consent in February 2011. The allotment was opened in May 2011.



Around half of the development funding was through 'Transition Linlithgow' as part of the Climate Challenge Fund. The Fund supported sustainable proposals for food growing and the promotion of healthy activity. The Society also obtained LEADER funds from an EU backed Scotland Rural Development Programme. Such funds are conditional on a number of issues but patient form filling by Society members brought successful support.

## Membership Eligibility, Rentals and Participation

To qualify the Society require members to live within 5 miles of the Oakwell Allotment and be aged 16 years or over. There is an annual membership fee of £5 and rentals are currently based on £1sqm for plots at 60sqm, 120sqm and 240sqm. All plot holders must be a member of the Linlithgow and District Allotment Society. Each member has voting rights within the Society and associate membership within the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society and the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners which provides access to reasonable rates for allotment third party liability insurance. The Society has also agreed membership discounts on purchases from the nearby New Hopetoun Garden Centre.

# CASE STUDY #5 **Kelso Allotment, Kelso**

## **The Development of a Replacement Allotment**

Kelso has had allotments for some time and following a range of issues a new replacement allotment was required following the closure of the Abbotsford Grove allotment. Finding the right site is often a challenge. Those interested in an allotment were looking a location that was readily accessible rather than having to drive to the edge of town or beyond. However, opportunities were limited and eventually an agreement was achieved on ground on the edge of town owned by Roxburghe Estates.

## **Land Agreement**

Having found a sympathetic land owner, the plot holders agreed security of tenure with a 10 year lease agreement between Kelso Allotment Society and Roxburghe Estates on 0.8 hectares of ground close to the racecourse known as Cauldriggs. The land was suitable for 40 plots with potential for expansion.

## **Allotment Demand**

Following the closure of the previous allotment a number of plot holders were anxious to find a replacement and a consultation exercise identified some 40 people interested in having a plot. This enthusiastic interest was across the age spectrum with young people, families and older people.

The Society has established a waiting list for plots and to determine whether more land is required in the future.



## **Lessons to be learnt**

The planning system should acknowledge that the provision of allotments is an integral part of a settlement and that use is protected within the local development plan. Public and Planning policies should recognise allotments as being an important part of the social and environmental fabric of Scotland's settlements and provide adequate protection in the same way as trees and buildings are protected. There should be suitable alternative site provision at the applicant's expense: If there is an overarching reason that the allotment should be removed, any planning consent should require an appropriate alternative parcel of ground to be provided that is at least equal to or better than the existing allotment provision, that all replacement allotment works are completed prior to any new development works taking place on the site.



# CASE STUDY #6

## Kirkcaldy Community Gardens & Allotments CIC



### Birth of an Idea

A number of people living in Kirkcaldy came together to form the Kirkcaldy Allotments Group to campaign for more allotments in and around Kirkcaldy. This campaign was as a result of a significant allotment waiting list and some impetus was required to kick start a proactive campaign. It is fairly typical for those in search of allotment ground to experience setbacks and the Kirkcaldy Allotments Group were no different but in 2011 a derelict walled garden was identified as a potential site. The walled garden was common good land which had resulted in some disputes over its future use. The proposal to form an allotment within the walled garden received some support from the Council providing the allotment members widened access to the wider community and the volunteer group became a formal body.

### A Formal Entity

There were two options considered for the establishment of a formal body. One option was to establish a charitable organisation but this required stringent standards to be met and the process was thought to take some time to complete. A second option was to become a Community Interest Company which required an application including Articles of Association to be made to Companies House. The Articles had to demonstrate certain criteria around its operations and governance so that it clearly provided community benefit. It had to demonstrate that it did not receive any private gain and that operations carried out were for the benefit of the community. Being a formal entity provided the opportunity to apply for grant support including a successful funding award from the Climate Challenge Fund to construct community allotment facilities. This whole process was achieved within a one month period.



### Community Engagement

The Kirkcaldy Community Gardens & Allotments CIC undertake a number of community engagement events including the publication of an annual report, holding open days, inviting attendance at annual general meetings and involvement in any major development proposals.

# CASE STUDY #7

## The Fife Experience: Allotment Strategy and Policy

During 2007 in Fife Council it was clearly apparent that there was a demand for more allotments. This increase in interest and demand brought about the creation of the Fife Allotment Strategy which was consistent with the Council's objectives of being the best green Council in Scotland.

### Community Engagement

A Fife Allotment Directions Steering Group was established in 2007 that included public officials and voluntary people and organisations. It identified two methods engaging with stakeholders.

Based on experience from both Edinburgh and Aberdeen's strategies, the first method was a postal survey to identify and survey some 400 existing plot holders and around 400 people on the waiting list. The response was just over one third of those surveyed and this produced a greater understanding of people's motivations and priorities.

The second method was to directly engage with all stakeholders who had expressed an interest in allotments including plot



holders and those wishing to be plot holders, public officials and voluntary sector representatives.

A 'Plotting the Future' event with some 160 people attending a presentation and workshop provided a good cross section of stakeholders and opinions on the value, promotion and inclusivity of allotments, allotment management and standards and how demand could be met. Both the postal survey and the public engagements provided a significant amount of evidence to allow an Allotment Strategy to be drafted and approved.



### Fife Council Putting Allotment Policy into Practice

An essential component of the allotment policy is to demonstrate in times of scarce budgets how allotments can be of benefit across a range of local authority policies and service.

Allotments are not just about growing but are about people's welfare and have a role to play in community planning and regeneration; they should be a consideration in spatial planning forming part of the place making agenda for settlements; they have a significant role in people's health and well-being and have a beneficial role in education across the whole age spectrum. The role of an Allotments Officer is divided between policy, development and operations including linkages to community orchards and community gardens. That role also includes acting as a facilitator and negotiator between Council departments, getting things on the ground and operationally making things work.

However, this work is not solely the domain of public officials as it requires strong inputs from community groups to develop ideas. Such engagement includes the holding of events, forums and group partnerships.



### Structures for an Allotment Organisation

Fife Council has three types of arrangements with allotment associations and plot-holders which are specifically designed to meet the differences of experiences and track records of the groups involved. Such arrangements need not be static but may move from one arrangement to another depending on the experience and performance of the association and the plot-holders.

The three arrangements are as follows:

1. Lease the Whole Site between Fife Council and the Allotment Association – this may be on a 25 year lease agreement with the Allotment Association dealing with the day to day management and plot holders. An example of this is at Kirkcaldy where the land is subject to a long lease but the wall structure of the walled garden remained the responsibility of Fife Council.
2. An Agreement with the Community Group and Fife Council for common matters and an agreement between Fife Council and the plot holder. Each plot holder is required to be a member of the Association and a licence is provided to occupy common ground within the allotment.
3. Direct Management between Fife Council who deal solely and directly with the plot holder.

Fife allotment rentals are relatively low with rental levels being subject to the level of services provided. This could be a rental for the ground without services and equipment, partially with services and equipment or a fully serviced site including huts and common facilities. In other words Fife Council seeks to have a flexible arrangement so that it can tailor an agreement to the requirements of allotment associations and plot holders. Some flexibility on rentals is applied in deprived locations. Recognising the wider benefits of allotments it is feasible that funding can be allocated from other public departments such as regeneration initiatives and place transformation programmes. Another example is where the NHS / Integrated Boards lease plots for therapeutic purposes.

In 2012 Fife Council published a Vision Plan for housing land and growing space, however, community



responses highlighted some negative reaction to growing spaces despite allotments already being allocated in the local development plan. Allotment officers recognise that they sometimes have to take the initiative within their own boundaries of good governance and risk. Such initiatives include acting as a broker bringing various community interests together including community trusts, community councils and other voluntary groups.

It is recognised that some residents have negative perceptions on allotments largely relating to visual amenity. While in principle planning officials can be supportive, their opinions may change depending on the strength of community representations on planning applications. Therefore there is a need to take an assertive position on interpreting regulations but at the same time seeking a consensus to gain support.

It is expected that Community Empowerment legislation may raise some issues relating to community asset transfer although Councils and Communities will still have to work in partnership with the likelihood that Councils will continue to let allotments to formally organised Associations on a 25 year full repairing and insuring lease. Such an arrangement provides a sufficiently long lease for Associations to help fund projects and keep local authorities involved as landowners. This is particular relevant in Climate Change Funding where the Council's involvement is preferred. The Council in dealing with Allotment Associations is looking for a demonstration that the Association is a sustainable proposition with a demonstration of competence.

# HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?

There are no set rules or processes for establishing an allotment, it depends on where it is, the views of the local community and landowners, the Council's commitment and financial support, how planners respond in terms of their policies and the community reaction. However, what we have learned from various case study experiences is that many of the principles are similar and with lots of enthusiasm those with ambition and hard work can actually create a plot.

## 1. Champions

Successful projects usually start with dedicated champions who bring people together. Champions help by overcoming barriers and enthusing others to get involved. Champions may be local activists, local politicians as seen at Croftburn, community workers such as at Wellhouse Allotment or passionate public sector allotment officers such as in Fife Council.



## 2. Supporters to drive the project forward

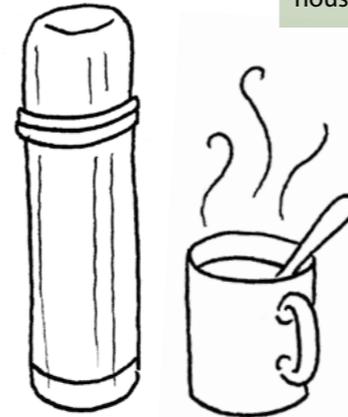
Champions bring together a group of interested people into a committee. This will collectively establish and share tasks such as liaising with the land owner, sorting out practical issues, talking to local groups and possibly running a Facebook page as a forum for continuous discussion, enquiries, education and news.

The committee should:

- Give power and trust to enthusiastic local people who know their own patch
- Encourage decisions through agreement, consensus and common sense.
- Agree what kind of formal entity they wish for good governance.

## 3. Find the land

Getting land for allotments can be a challenge and patience is needed as it may require a number of attempts before being successful. Meet with the local Council planners, look at local development plans and open space maps, talk to local people about possible sites which may be hidden behind houses or in the most unlikely places.



## 4. Talk and listen

Before making any formal applications for a site make sure that the local community and neighbours are on board. Too many projects have failed because the local people were not consulted early on. First visit local allotment sites and talk to the plot-holders so the committee agrees on the vision for the site. Then share this with the neighbours, community and Council councillors, local authority officers, local community (police, schools, community groups) and listen to any concerns. Patience is needed to persuade people of the benefits of allotments and to change any ideas that allotments are simply an unsightly mess of sheds and fences rather than vegetables. Considering a community hut that can be available for schools and outside group would be useful.



### 5. What does the site look like?

Design the site with the restrictions of the land and needs of all those involved, the individuals and the community, in mind. Involve all the people who want a plot whether on the committee or not. Discuss what you can do yourselves? What outside help is needed? Many aspiring plot-holders have practical skills that are invaluable in the construction of the site as well as project management, horticultural and community development backgrounds. Several sites have been established with little outside funding and need for external labour.



### 6. Getting Planning Support

Councils are encouraged to have a robust Local Development Plan Policy and they should acknowledge that the provision of allotments is an integral part of a settlement and be protected within the local development plan. Some planning officials examine detailed design issues such as sheds, paths and boundaries so it is useful to have a well prepared plan before seeking their approval. Good planning outcomes come from having good information so talk to other allotment associations about their experiences and explore allotment websites to help assemble your ideas and plans before consulting Council officers and submitting your proposals.

### 7. An Agreement to Occupy the Allotment

As shown in the Fife case study there are many different lease agreements to cultivate the land that can be made with the Council, the Association and the Plot Holder. Choose one that suits your group. Allotments on private land are vulnerable to an owner having alternative proposals for the land particularly where such alternative uses enable greater development value to be achieved. It is important that plot holders obtain a sufficiently long lease to cover their financial investment and their own commitment to nurturing the land.



### 8. Funding

Grant aid is available and most grant providers will, (within reason), fund a project if they like it. It is natural to try to establish a site cheaply, but there is money available. Talk to funders about what they will and won't pay for before submitting an application.

### 9. Getting it established

Allotments can help to transform a place and are now frequently referred to in Scottish Community Action Plans and project proposals to help regenerate their settlement. Enthusiastic local people with great awareness of their own place are showing that being empowered allows them to become allotment action makers. The experience of Wellhouse Allotment members highlights that people working on the allotment can realise their own capabilities and gain significant self-satisfaction and therapeutic benefit.





*Celebrate all the facets of your allotment and make sure that everyone from your MSPs to your local school children realise what a joy being a plot-holder brings.*

## FURTHER READING + INFORMATION

### ORGANISATIONS / ALLOTMENTS INFORMATION

- **National** - Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS)  
[www.sags.org.uk](http://www.sags.org.uk) / [secretary@sags.org.uk](mailto:secretary@sags.org.uk)
- **Edinburgh** - Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Association (FEDAGA)  
[www.fedaga.org.uk](http://www.fedaga.org.uk) / [committee@fedaga.org.uk](mailto:committee@fedaga.org.uk)
- **Glasgow** - Glasgow Allotments Forum (GAF)  
[www.glasgowallotmentsforum.org.uk](http://www.glasgowallotmentsforum.org.uk) / [admin@glasgowallotmentsforum.org.uk](mailto:admin@glasgowallotmentsforum.org.uk)

### LOCAL (Champion or supporters) (These may also have land)

- Community Councils
- Local Authorities
- NHS
- Housing Associations - [www.sfha.co.uk](http://www.sfha.co.uk), [www.westscot.co.uk](http://www.westscot.co.uk); local housing associations
- Development Trusts Scotland

### ADVICE on CONSTITUTIONS / FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

- SAGS (for exemplar constitution and rules)
- The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)  
[www.scvo.org.uk](http://www.scvo.org.uk) / [enquiries@scvo.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scvo.org.uk)
- **Charity and other forms** - [www.uk.coop/developing-co-ops/model-governing-documents](http://www.uk.coop/developing-co-ops/model-governing-documents)

[www.uk.coop/sites/storage/public/downloads/simplylegal\\_0.pdf](http://www.uk.coop/sites/storage/public/downloads/simplylegal_0.pdf)

### LEGISLATION and LOCAL PLANS

- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- Land Reform Act 2016
- Local Development Plans
- Planning Aid Scotland
- Community Land Advisory Service Scotland

### LAND IDENTIFICATION

- Greenspace Scotland ([www.greenspacescotland.org.uk](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk))
- **Maps** - CSGN ([www.centuralscotlandgreennetwork.org](http://www.centuralscotlandgreennetwork.org))

### FUNDING

- Check latest Government funding, e.g. Scottish Land Fund, Climate Challenge Fund, Big Lottery fund, Awards for All, Aspiring Communities Fund.
- Check bulletins from Greenspace Scotland, Federation of City Farms and Community gardens, Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT) and Keep Scotland Beautiful.

### DESIGN and BUILD

SAGS - Scottish Allotments Design Guide

### OTHER BOOKS and DOCUMENTS

- 'Raising Spirits' Jenny Mollison et al. - Centre for Confidence and Well-being, 2015.
- 'A Hut of One's Own', Emily Chappell - Head of Zeus, 2017
- 'Cool Allotments', Lia Leendertz - Pavilion Books, 2013



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& Gardens Society