






# Community Food Growing Strategy

Argyll and Bute Council.  
Food-Growing Strategy  
April 2020



**Vision** – Our vision is to encourage and enable people in our community who wish to grow their own food, by providing: information on potential community food growing spaces, advice and guidance.

## Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 1. Introduction, Vision, National Policy, Legislation and Local Development Plan contents</b>	<b>6-9</b>
1.0 Introduction	
1.1 Vision, Overall Aim of Strategy	
1.2 National policy	
1.3 Legislation	
1.4 Local Development Plan Policies	
<b>Section 2. Current growing space provision contents</b>	<b>10-16</b>
2.0 What is an allotment?	
2.1 Community Growing - Gardens and Allotments summary of stakeholder survey	
2.2 Indicative Map- showing the variety of growing spaces	
2.3 Current Management Arrangements	
2.3.1 Helensburgh Allotment Association	
2.3.2 Bute Allotment Association- Rothesay	
2.3.3 St. Andrews Allotment Association- Rothesay	
<b>Section 3.0 Advice for Community Groups</b>	<b>17-26</b>
 <i>'Be Inspired'</i> ColGlen Growers- Community Gardens Case Study.	
 <i>'Be Inspired'</i> Kyles Allotment Group	
 <i>Lochgoilhead Community Park and Gardens</i>	
3.1 Allotment Waiting List	
3.2 Planning Process	
3.3 Guidance for Community Groups and list of advisory groups Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.	
<b>Section 4.0 Monitoring and Review of the Argyll and Bute Community Food Growing Strategy content</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1 Monitor and Review.	
<b>Section 5.0 Appendix Content</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix A- Community Food Growing Guidance leaflet.</b>	<b>1-7</b>

### Images on front cover:



Garden in Cairndow -



Rothesay School



Ann Ashton Johnson



Helensburgh Allotment –Henry Bell Street-Marina Curran-Colthart.

## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy, which we have a duty to produce by April 2020 as set out in Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

As a rural local authority with 23 inhabited islands, we have a long established culture of growing our own food, with its multitude of benefits from the availability of nutritious and affordable food to social, health and environmental benefits.

I'm impressed with the variety and range of growing spaces we have in Argyll and Bute, including allotments, community gardens, school gardens, orchards, crofts allied with the use of vacant sites, adding life to otherwise forgotten spaces.

As a council, we are committed to assisting individuals and community groups to achieve their goal of growing their own and have put in place a number of measures to help achieve this.

Our Community Food Growing Strategy will contribute to Scotland's wish to become a Good Food Growing Nation by enabling those people interested in growing their own to enjoy and benefit from nutritious, healthy food.

I am pleased to promote our culture of growing our own food through the Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy and to acknowledge productive growing activity while also empowering people and community groups to take up the challenge.



Cllr. Aileen Morton – Leader of Argyll and Bute Council



## Acknowledgements.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of every individual officer in the project team – Development and Infrastructure Services-Local Development Policy, Customer Services-Legal and Regulatory Support and Communications. A special thank you to the stakeholders who helped shape the strategy and to members of the public who participated in the consultation who helped inform the final document and to those who supplied photographs.



Barcaldine Primary School- Growing spaces.

### **A snap shot on what our schools are doing to promote 'Growing our Own Food'**

Our schools promote 'Growing your Own Food' through Curriculum for Excellence with many using a variety of growing spaces from raised beds, containers to tunnels to grow a wide range of vegetables, fruit and herbs. We have included some pictorial examples throughout this publication to illustrate this.

A number of schools run a variety of programmes in order to gain the necessary skills for successful food growing. An example of this approach is Tighnabruich Primary School who run a year round permaculture programme which is based on ecological principles for food growing and includes composting and nutrient cycling, energy cycles and renewable energy, building design, storytelling and practical hands-on experiences. The school has who have a poly tunnel, an orchard and a forage hedge allied with two beds within the local Kyles Allotment Group community growing space which is located within the Kilfinan Community Forestry.

## Executive Summary

This is Argyll and Bute's first Community Food Growing Strategy aimed at encouraging and empowering people to grow their own food. Argyll and Bute is a very diverse area from towns near the Glasgow conurbation to remote rural areas. It has 23 inhabited islands and is known as a crofting county with a long history of people growing their own food. As a local authority, we recognise that there are currently many different forms of community food production in the area including: orchards, community growing spaces and gardens, edible hedgerows, school growing spaces and three allotments, thus reflecting the existing diverse culture of Growing (Y) our Own.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill - Part 9 which was enacted on the 24th July 2015, places a duty on local authorities to take reasonable steps to protect and provide growing spaces to meet community needs. It requires local authorities to provide a food growing strategy that reflects their area and to identify potential land in our Local Development Plan which may be used for cultivation by community groups.

The Argyll and Bute Community Food Growing Strategy explains how we support current community growing provision and how we will respond to future demand and support new approaches such as community lead growing space establishment.

The Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy provides an insight into what the allotment and community growing provision already exists within our area. This was informed by a stakeholder engagement survey, the results of which have enabled us to capture the current status, management arrangements and interest of the community in growing their own food.

In order to address the objectives of the strategy we will encourage and empower communities to establish their community growing spaces/gardens by providing information to community groups. These groups will independently manage their respective growing spaces addressing all day-to-day issues relating to plot holders.

The strategy outlines an approach that should deliver best value for Argyll and Bute Council Area and all community groups that have an interest in growing their own.

**Vision** – Our vision is to encourage and enable people in our community who wish to grow their own food, by providing: information on potential community food growing spaces, advice and guidance.



**Helensburgh Allotment-MCC**



**Individual plot- North Argyll-MC**

## **Section 1– Introduction, Vision, National Policy, Legislation and the Local Development Plan.**



**Helensburgh Allotment Association.**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Vision, Overall Aim of Strategy**

#### **1.2 National policy**

#### **1.3 Legislation**

#### **1.4 Local Development Plan Policies**

## 1.0 Introduction:

This Community Food Growing Strategy covers the whole of the Argyll and Bute Council area.

This area contains a number of towns but is predominantly remote rural in nature, including 23 inhabited islands. The strategy reflects this diverse area taking the varying needs and opportunities into account.

## 1.1

**Vision** – Our vision is to encourage and enable people in our community who wish to grow their own food, by providing: information on potential community food growing spaces, advice and guidance.

Argyll and Bute Council is supporting the Scottish Government’s aspiration for the country to become a Good Food Nation; a land of food and drink, not only in what we produce but also in what we buy, serve and eat. Food is one of the most important components of life and a key part of what makes the people of Scotland proud of their food is that it is tasty, nutritious, fresh and environmentally sustainable. The Community Food Growing Strategy provides a framework to help us deliver on this aim.

**1.2 National Policy:** Argyll and Bute Council embrace community food-growing in all its forms, one of which is growing food in community growing spaces and or gardens. Grow-your-own food (“GYOF”), can be in a community garden/space, school growing space, allotment or croft. All these areas can give control to our food growing community over how and what they grow; thereby increasing access to affordable, healthy and environmentally sound food; the very essence of being a Good Food Nation.

**1.3 Legislation:** The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (“the Act”) aims to help empower communities across Scotland and for those wanting to GYOF, it will encourage community groups to access land for food growing purposes. Argyll and Bute Council supports all forms of community food-growing, including improving access to land for food-growing purposes and giving more people the opportunity to grow their own food. This will have a range of social and environmental benefits from health and wellbeing, social interaction, knowledge improvement and exchange allied with doing their bit for biodiversity, and will help contribute to and improve our long term food security.

**1.4 The Local Development Plan (LDP)** is a land use planning document that guides development in our towns, villages and countryside. This helps create places where we can work, live and enjoy our lives by encouraging development in sustainable locations and safeguarding environmental resources such as open space. Food Growing Strategies identify growing spaces in our communities and have important links with Local Development Plans which identify and safeguard green infrastructure, including allotments and other open space. The Argyll and Bute Community Food Growing Strategy is covered by two Local Development Plans; The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp> and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Local Development Plan: <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/planning/planning-guidance/>.



As part of the Community Food Growing Strategy process, we identified existing and potential community growing spaces with the assistance of stakeholders, community groups and individuals.

Through the Strategy we will help create further opportunities for people to grow their own food by:

- Encouraging developers through the planning process to include space for community gardens and food growing within new developments;
- Review our open spaces in order to present opportunities to provide community growing spaces for interested groups; and
- Empowering communities to growing their own as part of open space and public realm improvements.



Gortanvogie – Strawberries



**1 of the raised beds and composter  
at Strath of Appin Primary School**





**Gortanvogie – Peas in Planters**

## **Section 2 – Focuses on Current growing space provision within Argyll and Bute Council.**



### **2.0 What is an allotment?**

#### **2.1 Community Growing - Gardens and Allotments summary of stakeholder survey and Public Consultation results.**

#### **2.2 Indicative Map- showing the variety of growing spaces**

#### **2.3 Current Management Arrangements**

##### **2.3.1 Helensburgh Allotment Association**

##### **2.3.2 Bute Allotment Association- Rothesay**

##### **2.3.3 St. Andrews Allotment Association- Rothesay**

## 2.0 What is an Allotment?

Many people will have differing views on the nature and description of what an allotment or growing space is and they can vary markedly from area to area as they do within Argyll and Bute. Any growing space can be defined by its own users, and none of these descriptions would be incorrect.

However for the purposes of this strategy, the definition of allotment that is required to be adopted is that set out by the Community Empowerment Act, where Allotments are defined as:

**ALLOTMENT MEANS LAND THAT —**

- (A) IS OWNED OR LEASED BY A LOCAL AUTHORITY,**
- (B) IS LEASED OR INTENDED FOR LEASE BY A PERSON FROM THE AUTHORITY, AND**
- (C) IS USED OR INTENDED FOR USE—**
  - (I) WHOLLY OR MAINLY FOR THE CULTIVATION OF VEGETABLES, FRUIT, HERBS OR FLOWERS, AND**
  - (II) OTHERWISE THAN WITH A VIEW TO MAKING A PROFIT**

[Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)

## 2.1 Community Growing gardens and Allotments:

In preparing the Argyll and Bute Community Food Growing Strategy, we consulted a variety of stakeholders and community groups that have embraced the culture of growing your own food-GYOF in its many formats and locations; the information was captured from a survey with the following results providing a summary of the variety of spaces used for growing food in our area.



Pixabay.

### **2.1.1 Summary of initial Stakeholder survey results analysis:**

As part of the Community Food Growing Strategy stakeholder engagement, Argyll and Bute Council carried out a survey of a variety of groups and associations. We sent 154 questionnaires in total with a response of 23 in total.

In terms of the geographical spread, all areas were well represented with a variety of growing spaces identified from school grounds to allotments and community gardens. The respondents grow a variety of vegetables, herbs, fruit and flowers. Some grow trees and have a wormery but all have a variety of composting facilities. We noted that with most people having a wide range of experience in growing their own.

Our survey also revealed that there is interest in people growing their own, highlighted by series of responses varying from interest in learning about and actively growing their own food, to health and wellbeing, biodiversity and environmental benefits.

Stakeholders were helpful with responses to further demand and identified potential Growing Spaces such as areas within open space designations, derelict sites and Council, Housing Association and Government owned land.

Some of the barriers identified in the survey revealed that the cost of development, lack of community resources, availability of suitable land particularly in reference to climate and soil types.

In summary stakeholders were keen to provide us with information and a steer as to the benefits and where the opportunities for additional growing spaces could be developed.



**Individual Growing Spaces- Kinlochlaich Gardens.**



## 2.2 Summary of the results of the Public Consultation.

The Public Consultation took place from 2 September-7 October 2019 with 344 responses.

Area via post code	Number of responses.
Helensburgh and Lomond	85
Cowal	66
Bute	16
Kintyre and the Islands	50
Mid-Argyll	45
Oban, Lorn and the Isles (North and South).	75
337 provided their post codes with none from 6	one out with Argyll and Bute,

The average age group involved in growing their own food was between 45 -64 years- 57.14%, 64- 75 years plus - 25.60% and under 12 years- 44 years 17.26%.

Where people grow their food was dominated by individual gardens with 85.96%, container gardening 6.10%, community garden 3.66%, allotment 2.13% and someone else's garden 1.22%.

What people grow are mostly: Herbs were the most popular- 80.77%, along with Vegetables 76.60%, Fruit-70.51% and other- 14.42%

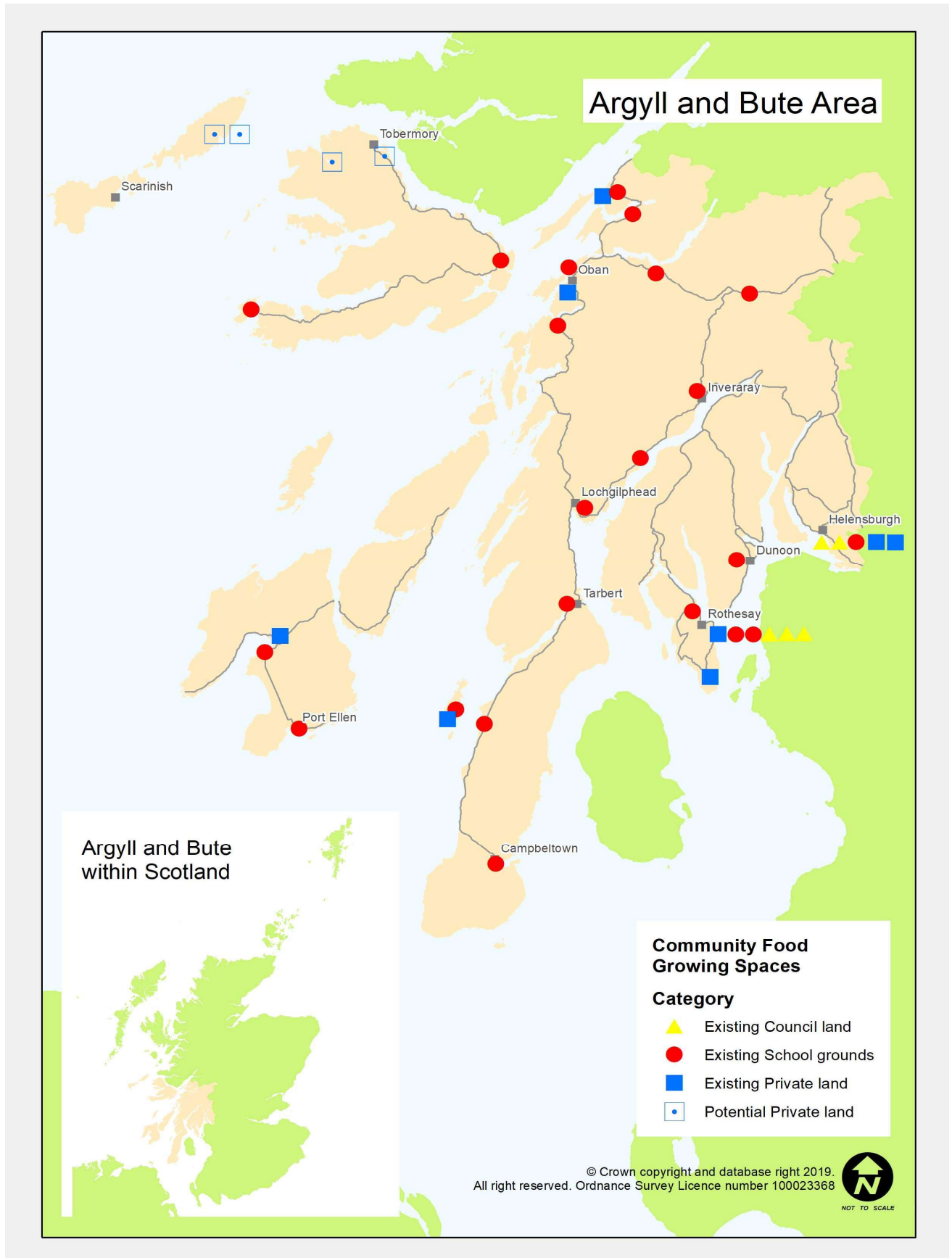
The consultees agreed with the vision at 93.70% (combination of strongly agree and agree) with 2.37% in disagreement (combination of disagree and strongly disagree) with 3.86% neutral.



Pixabay.

### 2.3 Current Food Growing and Allotment provision in Argyll and Bute- Story Map:

<https://argyllbute.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=8b4f54a2f5034d9299bdb11369408dc6>



## 2.4 Current Allotment Management Arrangements.

Argyll and Bute Council are the land owners for three well established allotments. These are managed by dedicated allotment associations. They are based in: Helensburgh and Rothesay.

- 2.4.1 Helensburgh Allotment Association – Henry Bell Street, Helensburgh:** was established over 10 years ago where plots holders grow a variety of fruit, vegetables, flowers and herbs. In terms of interest there is a slow and steady turnover of plot holders.



**Helensburgh Allotment-MCC.**

- 2.4.2 Bute Allotments Association, The Meadows by Barone Street, Rothesay**  
The site is Community managed by the Bute Allotments Association who organise the plots, rental of individual plots and waiting lists. The site is 0.28 Hectares.



**Bute Allotments Association- Rothesay.**

### **2.4.3 Saint Andrews Allotment/Grow Bute Allotment Association – Columns Hill Street, Rothesay**

The allotment identifies as a community growing space and was established in 2011 with a variety of plots and the addition of a communal area. It is managed by the association. The plot holders grow a variety of vegetables, fruit, herbs, flowers and even cactus. The site also supports a pond, a wildlife area and a chicken coop. The allotment is also used by St. Andrews Primary School and Apple Tree Nursery.



**Aerial View of the St. Andrews Allotment- Rothesay.**



## Section 3.0 – Advice for Community Groups.

### Case studies: *Be Inspired*



**Case Study 1:** 'Be Inspired'. ColGlen Growers- Community Allotment Gardens.



**Case Study 2:** 'Be Inspired'. Kyles Allotment Group.



**Case Study 3:** 'Be Inspired' Lochgoilhead Community Park and Gardens

### 3.1 Allotment Waiting List

### 3.2 Planning Process

### 3.3 Guidance for Community Groups and list of advisory groups Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.



**Web site:** <http://colglengrowers.org.uk>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/485352248245803/?fref=nf>

The ColGlen Growers were established in 2014 as part of Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust's Greener ColGlen project funded by the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund, where on project completion 2 polytunnels were handed over to the community under stewardship of the ColGlen Growers to independently manage and develop, under a governance model adopted from Scotland's Allotments and Gardens Scheme. Two polytunnels centrally located on two sites (1 in Glendaruel and 1 in Colintraive) accommodate 32 raised beds giving a total area of on <1 hectare combined or around 260m<sup>2</sup> of growing space which also includes outdoor communal areas.

There are 31 full members – 3 associate members do not have a plot but keep in touch via mailing list to take advantage of events, outings and any bulk-buying schemes. Currently, there is no waiting list.

The ColGlen Growers grow a variety of popular vegetables, fruits, herbs, spices and salads, some flowers, courgettes, pumpkins, squashes and exotics such as achocha, tromboncina, physalis, lemons, grapes, peaches and nectarines. The outdoor communal areas are used to grow potatoes, leeks, beans, herbs, soft fruit, stone fruit, nuts, apples and pears. As with the



original project outcomes, local growing and consumption reduces the food carbon footprint by avoiding the embedded carbon in imported fruit and veg, particularly the more exotic varieties, it increases awareness of where our food comes from, reduces food waste and improves health, encouraging more people to eat more fruit and vegetables.

The Growers host a variety of community events including an Annual Harvest Lunch in October; a Burns lunch every January, numerous seedling swaps and a summer salad day in August. Their open day coincides annually with Colintrave Village Fete. They hold an open AGM and members meetings which ensure participatory decision-making and budgeting, and have run a series of one-off events such as the official opening day with wormery and propagation workshops, a local food event with cookery demo, a jam-and-preserves-making day and a seaweed foraging day. Volunteer work parties are regular events.

In terms of training, an initial First Aid course was allied with First Aiders keeping up their own training; NPTC chipper and pesticide sprayer courses for volunteers were run as part of the bigger project.

In summary The ColGlen Growers success is based on sociable community growing in large, well-equipped polytunnels. This allows the growers to make the most of their own small spaces by extending the season to grow all year round, controlling watering, helping each other and sharing resources. The locations of the polytunnels enables access to the growing spaces and allied with plenty of mutual support and expertise adds to increased community cohesion.

New growers and visitors are very impressed and encouraged by the range, quality and quantity of produce grown. The project has the benefit of increasing food security and raises awareness of provenance, climate change and low carbon activities.



**ColGlen Growers.**



**ColGlen Growers.**



**'Be Inspired' by the Kyles Allotment Group.**



**Website:** <http://kilfinancommunityforest.co.uk/what-we-do/kag/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1422293217986288/>

Kyles Allotment group (KAG) was set up after the community purchased Acharossan Forest in 2010. The forest is owned and managed by Kilfinan Community Forest Company (KCFC) who lease land to KAG. KAG is run by a volunteer board. All plot holders are members with other local people can join KAG as members.

KCFC was awarded funding from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund for carbon saving projects that tackled food growing, home energy, wood fuel, travel and waste. Some of this funding was used to set up the allotment infrastructure.

The KAG is set on 500m<sup>2</sup> with plots rented to local people, who also have access to their own indoor and outdoor plot plus the communal growing areas, communal tools and equipment and gardening supplies. The allotment consists of two polytunnels (the second installed in 2018 to grow flowers) with one of the tunnels facilitating 28 plots. In addition, there are 32 outdoor plots, a community composting facility, deer fence, access to water with electricity supplies to the outdoor and polytunnel spaces, sheds and the KAG Kabin - a social space also used for meetings. The KAG members grow a variety of fruit and vegetables, have a community orchard and communal areas planted with soft fruits and other perennials including recently planted nettle and comfrey patches that will supply organic matter.

Since 2010 KAG have run regular producers markets and training events and to date have held the following:

- Regular workdays - where members work together on maintenance tasks such as building compost bays, clearing paths, building new beds etc.
- Put on 12 producers markets;



- Had planting and sowing demonstrations;
- Ran an annual bulb growing competition with the local school, supplying bulbs and composts and showing the children how to plant;
- Share additional plants and seeds by hosting swaps;
- Delivered a composting workshop with local primary school children;
- Held a food fermenting workshop;
- Held a herbal discussion group; and
- Made cider.

These Produce Markets provide an opportunity for local growers, and other producers, to sell directly to the public and provide income for KAG to help cover running costs and have allowed KAG to build up a surplus sufficient to cover the costs of replacing or improving the infrastructure as well as to pay contractors to carry out some of the on-going site maintenance.



With almost 10 years of community food growing, the interest and commitment to the allotments continues to engage healthy numbers of local people by promoting local food and produce throughout the whole community by holding the producers markets in the village hall and other allotment based events thus leaving a great legacy for future budding growers.



## 'Be Inspired' by the Lochgoilhead Community Park and Gardens.



Web site: <http://lochgoilhead.info/lochgoilhead-park-and-gardens/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2328335200773499/>

The Lochgoilhead Community Park and Gardens was established in 2019 and is part of a Lochgoilhead Community Trust project with the intention to create a space for everyone.

The gardens consist of six raised beds which belong to members of the community along with two large growing circles which are looked after by volunteers. The fruit and vegetables from the growing circles are to be sold at a reduced price to the community; the proceeds will be used to buy seeds etc. for the following years planting.

The Lochgoilhead Community Park and Gardens group have planted a heritage orchard consisting of apple, pear and cherry trees obtained with a grant from The Peoples Trust for endangered species. This has been under-planted with wild flower seeds. The gardens also boast an edible foraging hedge with plants provided by courtesy of the Woodland Trust tree pack initiative.

The group have adopted an organic approach by not using chemicals for pest control and are carrying out lots of companion planting to encourage wildlife and provide a variety of habitats for pollinators, thus contributing to the establishment of a natural ecosystem.

The Community Park and Gardens boasts a formal lawn, a stage and a formal border. The path that runs through the garden forms part of the riverside walk which is also a Lochgoilhead Community Trust project.



Stage



Riverside walk and park features.

Future plans are to complete the building of a composting area for the garden where members of the community will be encouraged to use this to dispose of kitchen waste etc.

Currently, the group seeking funds for a number of additions to the Park and Garden, they include a Polycrub to provide some undercover growing space, along with a pond and wildlife area.



Example of the Polycrub.

The group's long term goals are to provide workshops for growing, cooking, preserving and much more.



### Looking to Grow your Own!

If you are looking to acquire a plot to grow your own food, you can contact the council via the webpage to go on the Waiting List: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/allotments-register-interest>

In the meantime, the Map on page 14 provides information on community and association allotments and growing spaces which maybe near you or your group, these groups keep their own Waiting Lists, it is worth contacting them to enquire if plots are available that meet your needs.

#### 3.1 Waiting List Register

Under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the council is required to keep a Waiting List Register. People can register their interest by emailing: [areagovernance@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:areagovernance@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or alternatively follow Part 9 of the link: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/allotments-register-interest>

#### 3.2 Planning Process

The following information is only relevant to a group wanting to establish a new growing space in their area.

When choosing a site for a community growing space it is important to engage at an early stage with planning staff in either the Council <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-application-guidance> or Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/planning/our-planning-team/contact-planning-team/> who can advise on the relevant planning requirements, consents and advise in relation to the proposed site.

Planning consent may be required for a number of reasons, including:

- Change of use,
- Proposals within a designated area, for example garden and designed landscapes, sites of special scientific interest and conservation areas; and,
- Erecting structures on the site, such as outbuildings, fencing and parking.

There may also be other land use constraints for any potential food growing site. Notably, the use or disposal of 'common good' land or properties can be restricted by conditions imposed by those who gifted or sold the land or property. Similarly, land titles may impose burdens as to its use. These factors will need to be considered and investigated further before permission is given to prospective users. In some cases, court action will be required in order to reach a decision regarding use or purchase land with common good titles or burdens.

#### 3.3 Guidance for Community Groups-

The purpose of the Community Growing Space Guidance is to provide a framework for community groups who wish to grow their own food.

The guidance contained in Appendix A will set the scene for a community group to consider and factor in basic and aspirational elements into their site when developing their community food growing space or community garden and if appropriate, how the space can link into neighbouring green or open space. Please go to **Appendix A** for further information.



Barcaldine Primary School.



Strath of Appin P.S. School project- protecting the Apples.

### 3.3.1 List of advisory organisations:

1. Keep Scotland Beautiful Publication of new Creative Inquiry films to help groups plan and get started on food growing.  
<https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/food-and-the-environment/library/>
2. Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society.  
<http://www.growyourownsotland.info/support-organisations/>  
<http://www.sags.org.uk/Publications.php>
3. Social Farms & Gardens [admin@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:admin@farmgarden.org.uk)
4. Community Food and Health (Scotland) or CFHS:  
<https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/funding/funding-sources/>
5. As with all effective health interventions, therapeutic gardening is an evidence-based practice. <https://trellisscotland.org.uk/>
6. The Royal Horticultural Society are driven by a sheer love of plants and the belief that gardeners make the world a better place - this underpins all we do.  
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/scotland>
7. Allotments and Biodiversity publication with advice to encourage and retain a variety of habitat creations and associated species:  
<https://www.queensgateallotments.org.uk/home/bio-diversity/>
8. Funding opportunities: Access the Argyll and Bute website for further information: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/grants-and-funding>
9. Argyll College UHI: <https://www.argyll.uhi.ac.uk/courses/nc-horticulture/>

## Section 4.0 – Monitoring and Review of the Argyll and Bute Community Food Growing Strategy.



**Rothesay Joint Campus**



**Helensburgh Allotment- MCC**

### 4.1 Monitor and Review:

Argyll and Bute Council will monitor and review its Community Food Growing Strategy under Section 120 of the Act. This review will be carried out within 5 years of the date of the publication of the initial food growing strategy, and every five years thereafter. If the strategy needs to be changed following a review, then Argyll and Bute Council will update and publish the revised strategy.



**Pearl-bordered Fritillary – Sheila McKenzie**



# Our Growing Community



**Introduction**



**How can Community food growing spaces contribute to green spaces?**



**What are the multitude of benefits of People growing their own food?**



**Steps to Setting up a Community Food Growing Space Group.**



**What Community Groups need to consider when designing their new community growing spaces?**



**Guide for Growing on Contaminated Land: the guidance is very useful.**



**Examples of Community Food Growing Space Sites.**



## Introduction:

The purpose of the Community Growing Space Guidance is to provide a framework for community groups who wish to grow their own food.

The following information will set the scene for a community group to consider and factor in basic and aspirational elements into their site when developing their community food growing space or community garden and how if appropriate how the space can link into neighbouring green or open space.

In terms of involving local people, the community food growing space must be functional, attractive, accessible and meaningful in order to give them a sense of pride of place and ownership.

In terms of finding land:

<https://sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk/en/sc/home>

<https://sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk/en/resource/finding-land-site-features-checklist>.



Example of Community run allotment.



### **How can Community food growing spaces contribute to green spaces<sup>1</sup>?**

- Biodiversity – space and habitat for wildlife with access to nature for people;
- Amenity – places for outdoor relaxation and recreational activities;
- Climate change adaptation sustainable management of green spaces;
- Environmental education;
- Improved health and well-being – lowering stress levels and providing opportunities for exercise;
- Local character – the special qualities of an area;
- Education, Skills and Enterprise;
- Inequalities.



### **What are the multitude of benefits of People growing their own food?**

Working in a community garden can give you a sense of belonging and provide a platform for social interaction. The benefits of community gardens include:

- Knowledge sharing,
  - Social activity – meet and working with local people and developing friendships,
  - Physical outdoor activity in a pleasant environment,
  - Participation and communication,
  - Activities that foster self-help,
  - Nutritional health,
- 
- Supportive environments that promote social inclusion (for example, for frail, older people, people with disabilities, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds),
  - Reducing your carbon footprint,
  - Complimenting your food chain and experiencing the joy and satisfaction of harvesting produce from the garden.



### **Steps to Setting up a Community Food Growing Space Group:**

1. **Gauge interest-** in the local community by engaging with a range of age groups, either individually or via existing clubs/groups.
2. **Establish a group-** here is a general framework: management team, constitution, bank account, community growing space rules<sup>2</sup>, membership, funding, resources etc.
3. **Funding:** Access the Argyll and Bute website for further information:  
<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/grants-and-funding>

---

<sup>1</sup> Green space is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features.

<sup>2</sup> Community Growing Space Plotholder Management Obligations (Rules)

<https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/sites/default/files/Scotland%20Community%20Garden%20Starter%20OPack.pdf>



4. **Finding a growing space-** contact the local authority at your earliest convenience: re. Unused land owned by councils or social housing providers, reclaiming disused land and or an allotment.
5. **Factors to consider when choosing a site-** take account of practical issues such as:
  - (i) Site based within easy reach of the community,
  - (ii) Access to water,
  - (iii) Electricity- not essential but worth checking out.
  - (iv) Space for a shed or storage,
  - (v) Access and security
  - (vi) Length of lease - how long will you be able to use the land for  
If you intend to apply for grants, funders will often want you to have a land/lease agreement for a minimum of five years.
6. **Legal aspects:**
  - (i) **Leases-** In implementing a scheme for devolved management, it is important to ensure that the community organisation taking on responsibility has an appropriate and democratic constitution
  - (ii) **Public Liability** – The lease should also include a requirement for the association to take out an appropriate scheme of insurance to indemnify the local authority and protect the association, its volunteers and its members as well as third parties on site – with or without permission. Some insurers offer policies specific to the needs of allotment sites and associations; again, representative bodies can offer advice.
  - (iii) **Equal opportunities** – Community Growing Spaces should operate within the spirit of equal opportunities and are rented out on a first-come first-served basis, without preferential treatment.  
Your age, gender, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion or health are not a barrier to you renting a plot.
7. **Plan your garden,** the headings below will assist the group in planning their community food growing space.
8. **Factor in Biosecurity-** which is defined as a set of preventive measures designed to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases in crops and livestock, quarantined pests, invasive alien species, and living modified organisms (Koblentz, 2010). On page 7 is an example of a poster suitable for your growing space.



### **What Community Groups need to consider when designing their new community growing spaces?**

**Planning Permission-** seek guidance from the local authority.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/pre-application>

**Planning consent will be required for:**

Change of use of land, for example from open space to allotment;

- Any works within a Conservation Area; and

- Structures on site, including:
- Outbuildings and sheds on each individual plot;
- Communal buildings;
- Fencing; and
- Parking facilities.

A detailed design of new sites involves striking the right balance between the preferences of new plot holders and the interests of the broader public. It should also incorporate and sound environmental practices which should include biodiversity benefits.



### Factors to Consider:



**Access-** gated and lockable, car parking (restricted mobility, and to enable deliveries of manure and other essentials, parking for bikes.



**Infrastructure and facilities:** Note not all components will be required when setting up a growing space site; the list will provide the group with identifying priorities: paths- wide enough to accommodate a variety of users, flexible layout, variable height beds, adjacent to conventional plots, water, communal shed and or tunnel with rainfall collection facility as not all plots will be able to accommodate individual shed.

Where sheds, greenhouses and polytunnels are not supplied but are permitted, there should be clear design and/or supplier guidelines to ensure the overall quality of the construction on site and to enhance the external view.

The need to provide toilets will depend on whether alternative facilities are already accessible in the vicinity; where there are none, then the most environmentally friendly alternative is recommended such as a composting toilet



**Perimeter Fence:** (palisade) with mixed hedging in for shelter and provide a habitat.



**The Layout:** should meet the needs of the users with a variety of plot sizes: starter to more advanced- this can include raised beds. There are a number of ways of cultivating the plots themselves that achieve maximum environmental gain alongside the production of a rich crop of fruit and vegetables should be given positive support. For example, a section of the site may be reserved for use by organic growers. For other ways that plot holders on new (and existing) sites can be encouraged to reduce their environmental impact by adopting green gardening practices.



**Plots:** will vary in size and all must be demarcated and numbered.



**Composting and Waste disposal:** there should also be a policy, though the details (and associated infrastructure) will depend in part on site conditions (e.g. is there an otherwise unusable space that could be used for communal composting?).



**Integrating Biodiversity into your Community Food Growing Space:** as an important community facility your growing space can provide a valuable habitat for many native plants and animals, especially in more built up areas where green space may be limited. The variety of food growing in the cultivated plots, compost heaps, grass areas, sheds and boundary plantings of trees and hedgerows can attract a variety of birds, invertebrates and mammals.



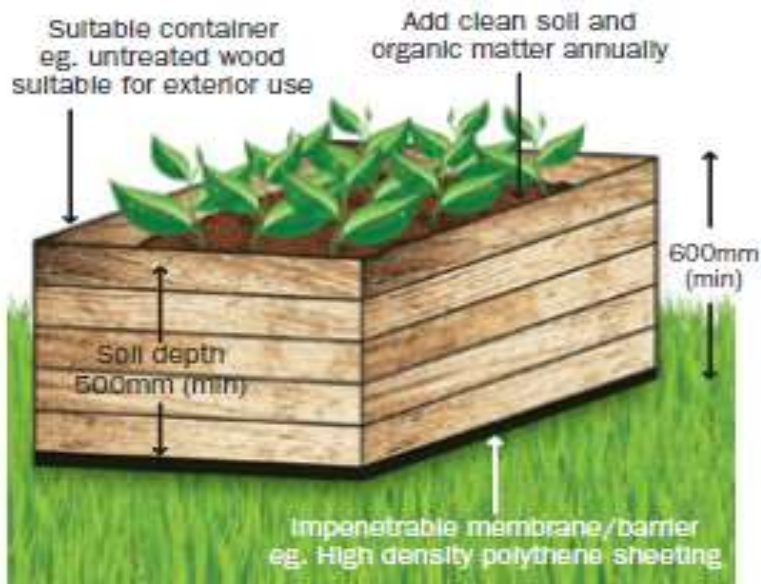
Example of a variety of food and flowers in a raised bed.



**Guide for Growing on Contaminated Land:** the guidance is very useful.

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

### Diagram of a “perfect” raised bed

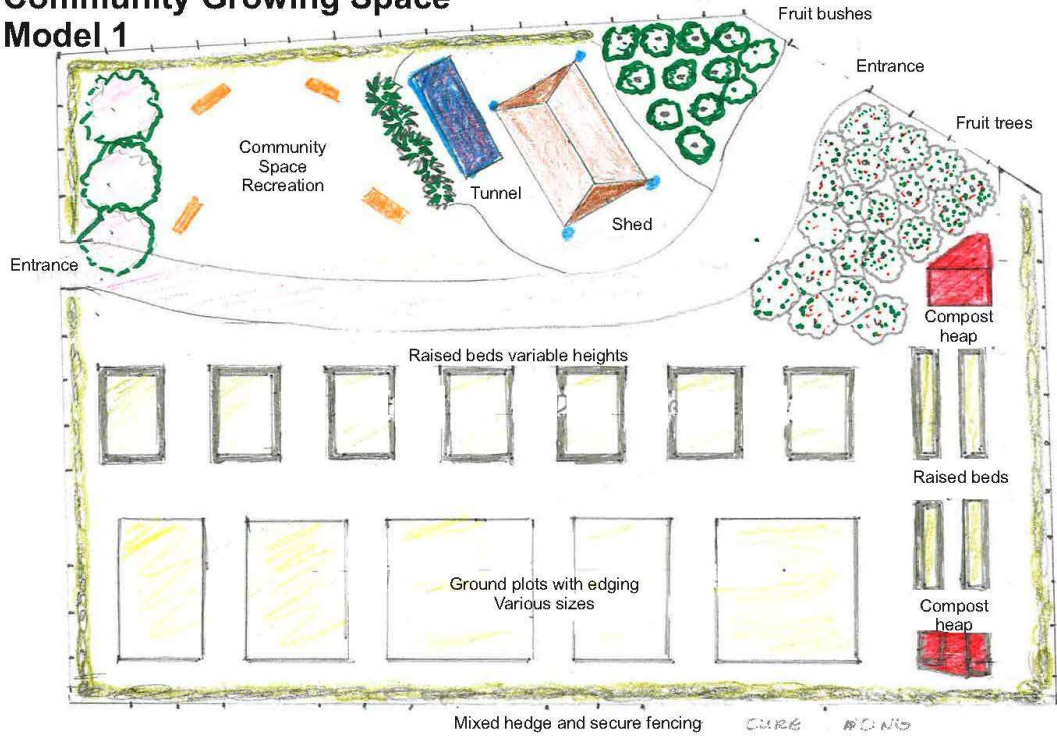


**Examples of Community Food Growing Space Sites-**

**Model 1=** with a variety of amenities/facilities and **Model 2-** community garden.



# Community Growing Space Model 1



# Community Food Growing Garden Model 2



## Biosecurity for your Community Growing Space – an example:

[Weblink:](#)  
[National Trust Biosecurity Turning Over A Clean Leaf](#)

### TURNING OVER A CLEAN LEAF

THE NATIONAL TRUST

How to protect your garden from pest and disease invaders

- 1 Plants coming in:** this is the way that most pests and disease-spreading pathogens enter a garden.  
**What can you do?**
  - Use reputable suppliers who have been 'checked out'
  - Source locally if possible
  - Avoid cheap imports and semi-mature specimen trees from abroad
- 2 Plants on arrival** need careful inspection.  
**Remember to:**
  - Check paperwork for compliance with purchase order form and plant passport if needed (eg EC Plant Passport UK/EW 12345)
  - Only accept delivery if you are sure that the plants are healthy
- 3 Quarantine areas** should be isolated from the main garden and the public.  
**What more can you do?**
  - Restrict access to the area
  - Be scrupulous about hygiene
  - Use dedicated tools
  - Hold new arrivals for 2-6 weeks and monitor frequently
- 4 Day-to-day hygiene:** many pests and pathogens are carried on boots!  
**It's important to:**
  - Wash all soil and plant material from footwear, and disinfect them
  - Clean and disinfect tools and machinery
- 5 Basic path maintenance** can help too.  
**How?**
  - Surfacing and levelling avoids puddles
  - Cleaning and clearing removes leaves and plant debris that can harbour pests and pathogens
- 6 Good plant husbandry** also matters.  
**What can you do?**
  - Use the right plant in the right place
  - Mulch when planting perennial ornamentals to prevent soil splashing onto foliage
  - Use space to help ventilation and reduce humidity
  - Manage plants to encourage vigorous, healthy growth
  - Prevent plants such as *Rhododendron ponticum* from choking the garden



- 7 Clear information** helps keep visitors informed and aware.  
**Why put up a notice?**
  - To inform visitors of serious outbreaks
  - To restrict access to ground under repair
  - To suggest responsible behaviour eg clean shoes, not taking cuttings, keeping to paths, dogs on leads etc
- 8 Irrigation water** should be clean and free from plant pathogens.  
**How can you ensure this?**
  - When using recycled water, eg collected off roofs, try to clean it before use (sand filtration works well)
  - Cover water tanks to prevent leaves blowing in
  - Regularly test water to check for pathogens
- 9 Organic waste** can harbour pests and pathogens.  
**What should be done with it?**
  - All dead plants, prunings, fallen leaves etc should be collected and disposed of safely
  - Composting is the best way, as it kills most pests and pathogens
  - Or you could collect waste in a covered skip for removal to an approved landfill site
  - Small amounts can be burnt where they lie
- 10 Plant collections** know what you've got.  
**What can you do?**
  - Make a record of the plants in the garden
  - Develop a management plan to conserve important plants
  - Propagate important plants through the Plant Conservation Programme
- 11 Regular monitoring** of the health of your plants lets you spot problems early and take prompt remedial action.  
**What can you do?**
  - Familiarise yourselves with the main pests and diseases of plants in your garden
  - Get problems identified
  - Report all suspicious symptoms to your Garden Adviser
  - Notify suspect findings of quarantine pest and diseases to Plant Health authorities