



GrowGreenScotland

Look Out Your Window- The case for growing in communities

Making the case- what this is, why it's important and how can we work in partnership to celebrate, enable and accelerate so much more of this so that every community might benefit.

GGs with years of experience in the community sector advocates, and supports growing groups across Scotland through collaboration with communities, local authorities, Scottish government and other third sector partners. Underlying all these models is a commitment to regenerating and rebuilding soil and protecting and working with nature.



About you

Many of us, that have access to our own or nearby greenspace, don't necessarily fully understand what is meant by growing in communities, its importance and necessity in regeneration and our general landscape nor the potential role we can play to get involved.

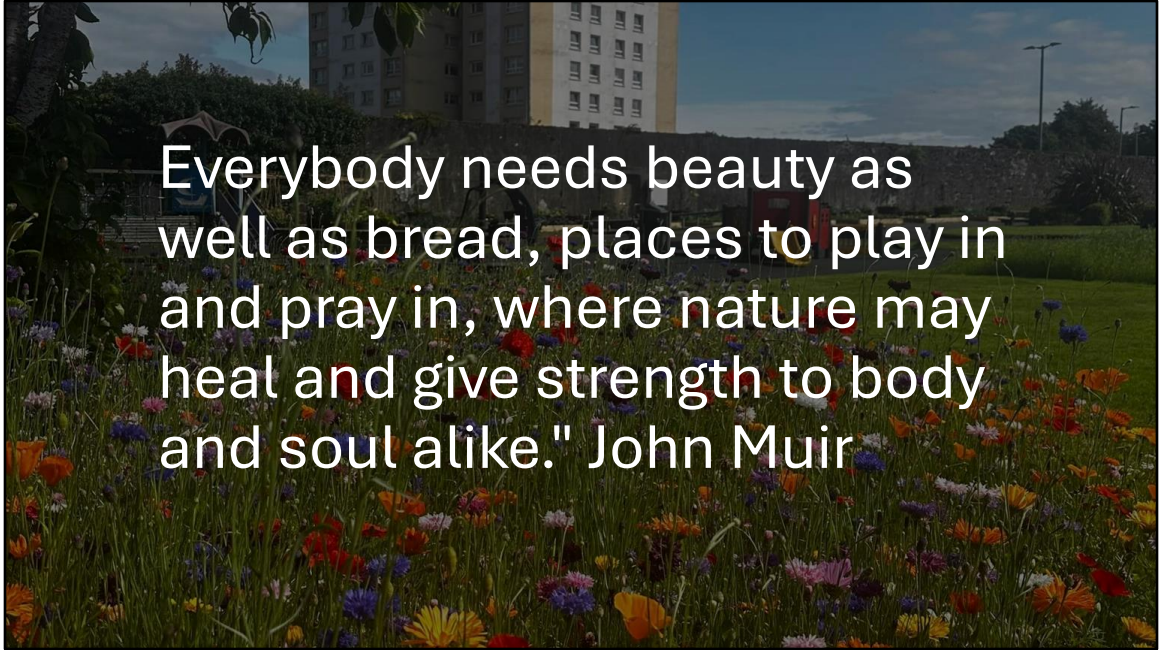
Straw poll to ascertain role be it personal, professional or both. Questions along the lines of garden, park, allotment or other access, children or grandchildren with a school garden, notice the price of fresh food, like to eat food grown in Scotland; strawberries, raspberries, tatties, kale and more, fearful of the future impact of the climate and nature emergency, involved in regeneration, see themselves as place makers. Have a growing space local to them?



Growing in communities



All photos taken from groups growing in Shettleston, Fairlie, Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Winchburgh... there are many more. When we talk about growing in communities we refer to ways of growing across Scotland in statutory and voluntary settings- on public and private land and groups of all shapes and sizes and forms- school gardens, hospital gardens, farm gardens, allotments, orchards and community gardens. This is a movement growing in size because it WORKS, on multiple different levels. These aren't nice to have greenspaces, these are essential infrastructure and components to our civil society and they will become increasingly important in our future. This is essential infrastructure when talking about regeneration and commensurate with its multiple benefits we would argue needs to be regarded as such when looking at blue/green infrastructure. This work is positive, hopeful, promoting and enabling active citizenship that responds to community need. Multiple benefits-better connected to ourselves, nature and our community, support, promote and enable healthy food choices, combat social isolation and loneliness, hubs for meaningful active citizenship, nature protection and restoration, opportunities to share, grow and preserve food growing skills at a time when we urgently need to be building local resilience, informal but vital education, safe havens for people across society seeking refuge, solace and connection. Hopeful, creative, responsive work that is cost effective and almost impossible to fully measure!



- From a regeneration perspective when we grow local to where we live we build community, get behind collective endeavour, connect with one another, nature and ourselves. There are multiple health, environment and social wealth benefits for very low inputs. We all need this, How can WE make space for this, enable and accelerate it as professionals?

Bonhill Community Garden



Examples of the benefits and barriers faced by groups growing on contaminated land. Bonhill Community Garden- West Dunbartonshire growing on former sports pitch. Inspirational, approach to offering local families opportunity to connect, care for nature and grow food. Approach is through working with local children and schools to slowly address health inequalities in a long lasting way by taking an asset focus. This important work is led by visionary, committed community members and it takes time and persistence to navigate the many external and internal barriers.

Multiple barriers to getting started on this unused land-

1. Concept of contamination- off putting with the groups key message of building soil health and from that growing healthy, local food for everyone with nature.
2. When the group began there was no CLO, council paid for tests and tests returned said they needed to grow into raised beds.
3. Objective from supporting people to get growing suddenly changed to get building *then* growing. This wasn't their skill set, for morale they needed results fast and it was expensive to buy materials.
4. What would have helped? – “not another leaflet on growing on contaminated land” but someone to offer professional advice and guidance on what they needed to do and support to do it.

"We would never have made it this far if it hadn't been for specialist support on contaminated land"



Grow 73 Rutherglen

Planning permission for their asset transfer process required the group to run soil tests. This was yet another hurdle the group faced.

The group unaware of the CLO role in S. Lanarkshire council wrote to many companies across the central belt asking for pro bono support. One got back, partnered with another local authority, found S.L CLO officer and worked with others to use soil testing for CPD opportunity.

Fundraising for tests for contamination a pretty hard sell to the local community so offer of free support and testing was a deal breaker.

A perfect example of corporate social responsibility! Grow 73 hugely grateful of the partnership support they have had from specialists at a time when they might have just given up otherwise.



Growing communities

Also worth mention of Growing communities- growing on vacant, derelict and/or contaminated land makes sense for everyone. Multiple examples of success both in permanent but also meanwhile settings- Glasgow Stalled Spaces programme.
<https://getgrowingscotland.org/land-stories/>

Barriers



The biggest is our inability to act fast enough to see *and* try things differently. Our **imagination** of what's possible with communities leading. Lack of **recognition** for the minimal input, and extraordinary outputs.

Inaccurate tools for assessing place- The Place Standard Tool –in how we assess land and what's important- we will need to grow more of what we eat and eat more of what we grow closer to home for our food security. There is very little land for growing left with multiple competing pressures on land. This necessitates safe soil as a starting point.

LAND access (finding land and getting the right agreement, not necessarily always community ownership but a long term agreement), governance, and accurate information and resource on tackling suspected contamination and mitigation. In partnership we can remove some of those barriers- as specialists in regeneration our sector needs partners and it needs advocates.



Resources

www.getgrowingscotland.org



Growing in the community
Scotland Land Guide

First published in 2011, this revised guide (2022), written for community groups and landowners by specialist advisors, outlines a series of components and thinking required to reach a land agreement that works for everyone.



Our Growing Community

There are many spaces and places where food could be grown in our villages, towns and cities - this resource can support people to think about how we can approach and deliver food-growing opportunities more creatively, close to where we live.



Looking For Land?

In many cases, community growing initiatives begin from a desire to do something with vacant land in the local area, while in other cases there is no obvious land for food-growing available, and people must look for suitable sites. Places to Grow offers some potential solutions.



Land Stories

Stories from across Scotland demonstrate what is possible when communities and public and private landowners work in partnership. Share your land story here to inspire and support others to get growing.



Growing on
Contaminated Land

This **guide** provides technical information to help community groups, land owners, and local authorities assess and tackle the issue of soil contamination where there is any possible history of dumping or contamination.



Land Advisory Service

If you are a community group or landowner and require specialist guidance or support with any aspects of land access the **Community Land Advisory Service** can help.

GrowGreen Scotland in partnership with communities delivers Scotland's growing in communities hub www.getgrowingscotland.org. Advocating, inspiring and enabling groups and enablers to get involved. We deliver help@ advisory service supporting any group looking to get growing with what they need to know, when they need to know it. Timely ongoing support and advice.



How can we work together to remove barriers and therefore accelerate things on the ground?

Explore your role- personal and professional.

Personal growing groups always welcome new volunteers, trustees and or partners... reach out to your nearest space we can help you find one.

Professionally- Advocacy when involved in decision making, pro bono support with assessing, testing and where possible remediating land.

Come find us!