



GROW LOCAL 2023

Overview

GOOD FOR PEOPLE, PLACE AND PLANET

Janine Potter - Grow Local Project Coordinator Telford & Wrekin



OVERVIEW

Community gardens and orchards are green spaces that provide us with beneficial opportunities for our physical and mental wellbeing as well as species and habitat conservation. They are places where we can grow food to nurture ourselves and our environment. The importance of these spaces to connect with nature is now well documented and understood. We are part of nature and need to interact with our environment and protect it to be healthy ourselves.

Approximately 520 thousand hectares of residential gardens exist in urban areas in the U.K. Potentially a lot of space for growing your own food. However, not every home has a garden. Community gardens can be great social gathering places for meeting people, sharing skills and resources. Those who do have gardens can replicate what they have learnt at the community garden in their own garden. Those who don't, have a way of connecting with others and accessing all the benefits of being in a natural environment.

A CSA Model for Telford & Wrekin

If a CSA model were adopted in Telford for example it could be made up of pockets of land within urban spaces and on urban fringes. Telford and Wrekin is largely a urban demographic with patches of green spaces, Of these there are 306 green guarantee sites (map available online), spaces that are protected from further development.

An acre of land could feed around 50 families. These CSA's are not able to grow all the food for families all year round but they are increasing the amount of food that can be grown in this country, to be able to feed ourselves. Many CSA veg boxes are available May - November with the option for the small producer to 'buy in' from larger producers. In either situation a CSA venue could continue to be used for other events/activities/training/wellbeing sessions inside and outside of veg production season

The CSA model can support families and individuals on lower incomes through sliding scale payments and pay it forward where communities pay

“cultivating just 1% of this peri-urban land (in the U.K) for horticultural production would create an additional 530,000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables, worth £3 billion, and around 160,000 FTE jobs ” .www.sustainweb.org

In recent scientific research there is also an increasing understanding of the importance of a healthy soil microbiology being linked to a healthy human gut microbiome. (Spector, T. 2022) Intensive farming practices such as ploughing and the use of herbicides are degrading our soils and depleting the nutrient value of our food.

In smaller scale food production areas, like community gardens, composting, mulching and no dig, build soil organic matter and can support a more diverse community of soil life. Compost Club reducing food waste, recycling nutrients community gardens composting projects to reduce food waste and recycle nutrients

This soil life affects the nutrient density of the crops we eat as the microorganisms in the soil convert essential micronutrients into plant available forms. A plant makes phytochemicals such as flavonoids to protect and keep itself healthy, these have health benefits for us too



February

SGFP started investigating and mapping local food growing projects and initiatives in Telford and Wrekin. Starting with the annual Seed Swap event (Transition Telford/Climate Action Hub) There were so many seeds donated they were overflowing off the tables! Residents were keen to swap and talk about seeds and ask questions about food growing. BBC Shropshire covered the event. The climate action hub provided free tools, equipment and plants.

March

SGFP attended Shropshire and Telford Women's Alliance (STUWA) coffee afternoon to discuss their food growing space. Leegomery Community garden (Transition Telford) hosted a Master Composter's course to promote home composting. SGFP attended to discuss the garden's needs and talk to residents.

April

SGFP met the Dawley Hamlets Community allotments committee and discussed the Right to Grow motion. The group have put in a application to Telford & Wrekin for a proposed allotment site on the closed Phoenix school site. SGFP met with community garden leaders and council members to identify community groups and gardens and their needs.

May

SGFP attended Oakengates Kings Coronation event in Harthill Park- to deliver an edible flower sowing activity. Over 60 children potted up nasturtium seeds to take home. and played a seed identification and composting game.

June

SGFP spoke with MIND Telford's Green social prescriber working in partnership with Madeley Court Medical Practice and Telford Crisis Support started to develop a community food garden.

July

Hollinswood School invited SGFP in to discuss the school's sustainability practices and view their school allotments and orchard

August

Met Darran at Donnington Community Orchard
Various volunteering sessions and visits throughout the month..

September

Severn Gorge Countryside held an apple pressing event at Woodside community orchard. SGFP attended and provided a scatterer to macerate the apples and make them easier to juice. Met Liz and visited Dawley community garden, proposed allotment site, orchard and Dawley Christian Centre garden.

October

SGFFP was invited to Woodside Allotment for a tour around plots and shop.
Harvest Local event at Park Lane Centre, Woodside. SGFP took along strawberry plants and runner bean seed pods to share with the community and discuss seed saving and food growing..



Grow Local Timeline



Dawley

Dawley Christian Centre, Garden, Coffee
Bar & Food Bank
High Street
Dawley, TF4 2EX

AT A GLANCE

PROPOSAL

- Create a space accessible to all
- New Volunteers
- Sensory Garden
- Food Growing Space

BENEFITS

- Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- Intergenerational Skill Sharing
- Healthy Eating and sharing food
- Education

OVERVIEW

In May 2023, two girls from the Dawley community raised £2,000 through the Make a Change 11-18 competition (Telford and Wrekin Council) to create a children's food growing space at Dawley Christian Centre. The girls wanted to develop the sensory garden and to encourage children to grow their own food.

I met Sharon in September, at the centre, and she showed me around their space. The garden has been divided into sections by a circuit of concrete paths. They are very keen that the space can be accessed by all. The path leads to an area of hard standing where a covered communal seating area will be built.



Sharon said what they really need is volunteers to help them to develop and maintain the space. While we were chatting one such valued volunteer at the centre was taking apart pallets to upcycle for garden projects. They hope that other people within their community with gardening and plant knowledge will help by mentoring others. They will be continuing to develop the garden in Spring 2024 and those that would like to get involved can contact Sharon at the Christian Centre. sharon.dawleychristiancentre@gmail.com
01952 505108





Dawley

Diane Morris Community Garden, Great Dawley Council Hall, Dawley

AT A GLANCE

NEEDS

- Volunteers

BENEFITS

- Food grown for local community to share
- a working example to teach how food can be grown in small spaces
- opportunity to learn new skills and join others
- Physical and mental Health and wellbeing

OVERVIEW

In 2015, a car park behind Dawley Town Hall was converted into a community food growing space by volunteers, with funds from Veolia and training sessions from a community gardener.

Vegetables from this garden and Chelsea gardens within Telford Town Park were donated to the Telford Food Bank. Volunteers through the Let's Grow project and Upstart in Telford and Wrekin tended to the two gardens.

Currently there are breakfast club activities with John, a volunteer leader. Families can plant and harvest produce to take home.



Volunteer sessions can be at times to suit the individual.

Contact Sarah Houlston – Great Dawley Town Council Project and Event Manager
01952 567910 07876401714
sarahh@greatdawley.com



Dawley & Little Dawley

Allotments Proposal
Dawley

dawleycommunityallotments@gmail.com

Facebook page: Allotments for Dawley Hamlets

Community Orchard
Rednall Fields
Little Dawley

AT A GLANCE

PROPOSAL

- New Allotments
- Community Orchard
- Community food growing space

BENEFITS

- Access to green space
- Shared resources
- Social Events
- Food sharing
- Knowledge Exchange
- Increased biodiversity

Rednall Fields, Little Dawley, is a green guarantee site that is currently used by local residents and dogwalkers. The committee proposed the planting of 15-20 fruit trees on the site and native edible shrubs within the existing hedging to increase biodiversity. The orchard was given the go ahead in September 2023.

OVERVIEW

A committee formed to Propose Allotments and at a separate location, a community orchard. The allotments committee have requested the land at the previous Phoenix school site in Dawley, near to the Captain Webb Primary School. The land is managed by Great Dawley Town Council & Dawley Hamlets Parish Council.

In Oct 2022, 56 supporters signed a petition on Change.org.

Applying the Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908, to provide land for garden usage in the community and Right to Grow motion. (Councillor Rosemary Dartnall of Shropshire Council.)

The Allotments have been approved in principle, they are now awaiting application response from Telford and Wrekin Council.





Madeley

Madeley Community Orchard
Bartlett Gardens, Madeley, TF7 5LP.

AT A GLANCE

NEEDS

- To continue to develop and maintain the gardens
- Tools and Equipment.
- To recruit more volunteers

BENEFITS

- Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- Intergenerational Skill Sharing
- Community food growing and sharing



OVERVIEW

Madeley Community Orchard was originally developed as allotments. There are now 70 different fruit trees including many different varieties of apples and pears, and others; nut, peach and nectarine. All the fruit is grown for the local community to harvest and enjoy. There are a number of allotment beds for vegetables, herbs, soft fruit bushes, long borders of herbaceous plants for pollinators and a pond for wildlife. The gardens and trees are tended by a small group of volunteers once a week. The volunteers that help are varying ages and abilities.

Volunteering is on Tuesday mornings 10-12 Contact Jude Pilgrim
01952 567280 or judepilgrim@virginmedia.com



The group would like help with team leaders and committee members. They also need:

- shears, secateurs, telescopic loppers and a Grass swipe
- wheelbarrows
- Benches with backs and arms
- Morello cherry trees.





Coalbrookdale

Woodside Community Orchard,
Coalbrookdale, Telford, TF8 7ED.

AT A GLANCE

NEEDS

- New Volunteers

BENEFITS

- Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- Intergenerational activities
- Food & skill sharing
- Environmental Education

OVERVIEW

Woodside Community Orchard is managed by the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust. They hold an annual apple pressing day when the local residents and the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust volunteers join together to harvest and juice the apples to take home. The volunteers help throughout the year to maintain the orchard and other areas within the trust's land. There is a main centre at the Trust where they hold workshops, events and courses.



Apple pressing day was held on 21st September 2023. A huge press was transported into the orchard and many volunteers and local residents bought empty bottles. Children and adults searched out and picked the ripest apples. The scrapper macerated the chopped up the apples before they were squeezed in the press.



The Orchard in the Spring 2023





Donnington

Liz Clare Community Orchard,
Bartlett Gardens, Donnington,
TF2 8GA

AT A GLANCE

NEEDS

- New Volunteers

BENEFITS

- Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- Intergenerational Skill Sharing
- Healthy Eating
- Education

OVERVIEW

Managed by the Donnington Partnership CIO. The orchard was started by Yugoslavian European Voluntary Workers in the 1940's, after the Second World War. The garden is open to community groups, volunteers, schools and the public. Transition Telford have been offering support to the orchard since discovering the orchard in 2021. The groups work together to pick fruit, prune fruit trees and sponsored an apple ID day with apple expert Wade Muggleton. They also donated fruit trees and a goji berry bush this year.



Access to the orchard has just been improved with permeable pathway laid down for wheelchair, scooter and pushchair access. Darran also works with The Silver Threads Hall to engage children in sowing seeds and learning about the outdoor environment. Volunteer Opportunities 11am most Saturdays. Contact Darran on the facebook page to volunteer:

www.facebook.com/groups/donningtoncommunityorchard





Woodside, Telford

Woodside Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Association, Wyvern, Telford, TF7 5QB

AT A GLANCE

BENEFITS

- Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- Intergenerational Skill Sharing
- Healthy Eating
- Education
- Rainwater harvesting
- Resource sharing
- social events

OVERVIEW



Woodside Allotments has beautiful communal outdoor seating areas next to the community building with a shared kitchen and indoor seating which has an allotment supplies shop at the rear. There is a memorial garden, beehives and shared polytunnel for plot-holders to use to start their seedlings. These areas bring people together to enthuse, encourage, inspire and motivate each other, to share ideas and skills. Money is saved by swapping and sharing seeds, plants and other resources. In the shop smaller quantities of seeds can be found that have been divided up from larger packets, to reduce waste and be more economical for plot-holders.





Telford MIND & Telford Crisis Support Allotment Garden, Court Street Medical Practice, Madeley, TF7 5EE

AT A GLANCE

PROPOSAL

- Create an food growing allotment
- A social and therapeutic space

BENEFITS

- Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- skills sharing
- Social inclusion
- local food production
- Habitat creation
- Sustainable gardening

OVERVIEW

Telford MIND, Telford Crisis Support and Madeley Court Medical Practice are working in partnership to develop a allotment space. A place to promote physical and mental wellbeing and grow food for the local community. I joined the group at tea break and spoke to two gentlemen who use the service provided by MIND. They said how much they enjoyed making bug boxes, tending plants, and accessing the new green space. The Telford MIND green social prescribers run sessions once a fortnight on Tuesdays 1-4pm.

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact: Adrian Payne, Green Social Prescriber, Telford MIND: adrian.payne@telford-mind.co.uk

As part of the development of the new site, several saplings have been planted to form a natural boundary. TCS and Telford MIND would like the space to provide a wider benefit to the community through creating a diverse and sustainable local green space. They welcome any ideas or suggestions from the local community.

www.telford-mind.co.uk
www.telfordcrisissupport.org.uk

A diversity of fruit, vegetables and flowers have been planted this year including cabbages, beans, strawberries, leeks, potatoes and sunflowers. Donations of seeds and plants welcome.





Hollinswood Primary School
Allotments and Orchard,
Dale Acre Way, Hollinswood,
Telford,

AT A GLANCE

PROPOSAL

- School Allotments and Orchard

BENEFITS

- Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- School curriculum links
- Understanding environment and sustainability
- Confidence and self esteem
- Teamwork and communication
- Links with home and the community

Eco Committee activities: The children have upcycled broken welly boots from Forest School to grow flowers for pollinating insects. They have also upcycled old school furniture to make planters. They also use pallets for loose parts play, which is imaginative play that the children engage in during breaks.



OVERVIEW

Shropshire Good Food Partnership met with Susanne (Eco School leader) visited Hollinswood Primary School, Telford, at the beginning of July 2023 to see how the school allotments and orchard were progressing and to find out more about their sustainable practices.

The school received a grant in May 2023, from the King's Coronation Fund. 'The King's Patch' has been developed to provide the children with more places to grow. Several vegetable and fruit patches are being developed within the school grounds.



Sue, the school gardening club leader and Kathy the school cook, have been working with the children after school. They have created themed beds; fruit patches, herb beds, fruit patches, roots beds, and companion planting of climbing beans with sweetcorn. The gardens have also provided therapeutic activities for children who need some time out during the day. RHS School Gardening Awards Levels 1 & 2 have been achieved and they are now working on Level 3.

NEEDS

The school expresses the need for external expertise, volunteers, and funding to overcome challenges and further develop their sustainability initiatives. A network or forum to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and collaborate with businesses and organisations interested in sustainable food systems. The school also wants to improve its external communication efforts, such as updating the website and using social media platforms to reach a wider audience.

Suzanne, Kathy, Sue and Jo have worked together, with the children, to formulate an excellent example of what can be achieved. Growing their own food from school plot to school dinner plate. They haven't stopped there; they have involved the families in roast dinner days and have volunteers days for example where parents and locally businesses help to put in raised beds.



Children have grown salad leaves in repurposed fruit containers, which they can take home and enjoy with their families.

Kathy talks to the children to ask them what they would like to eat and has a wonderful way to motivate them to make healthy choices. They help her to write the menu's. Kathy's 'squeaky beans' have become a favourite selection! With this level of communication, she has been able to reduce food waste dramatically and also increase the number of meals ordered.

Some ideas the school would like to develop are:

- a wormery
- a greenhouse with safety glass
- Grey water recycling (advice & ideas needed on land drainage and safe rainwater collection)

PLASTIC FREE
SCHOOLS
SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

Hollinswood was the first school in the Telford and Wrekin borough and Shropshire county to receive the Plastic Free Schools Award (Surfers against Sewage) in 2020.



Transition Telford Leegomery Community Garden, Leegomery, Telford

OVERVIEW

AT A GLANCE

- A food growing garden for the community
- Events and workshops
- Opportunity to join a local Transition Town group

BENEFITS

- Mental & Physical Health and Wellbeing
- Learn how to grow your own food in a sustainable way.
- Free Food

Leegomery Community garden is for local residents to share, to grow food and to enjoy. The garden has a mixture of herbs, annual and perennial vegetables, flowers to attract pollinators and fruit bushes.

Transition Telford hold regular gardening sessions on the second Tuesday of the month. They also meet on the first Tuesday of the month to discuss and plan activities to help communities move away from fossil fuel dependence and live more sustainably. They work in partnership with other groups, Climate Action Hub and Telford Repair Cafe and offer support to other community gardens groups and Donnington Community Orchard. They hold three main public events each year; a Seed Swap, Plant Swap and a Harvest Local.



The garden, above pictured in March 2023, when a Garden Organic home and community composting session was delivered to local residents at the adjoining centre. Rachel and Anton from Garden Organic explained the how and why of home composting for waste reduction, recycling nutrients and building healthy diverse soil health, teeming with life. They brought along their soil microscope and worm bin so residents could have a closer look at compost microbiology. James and Lynn explained how they make compost in the garden at Leegomery, to add organic matter and use no dig practices to build and conserve healthy soil. They have water butts to collect rainwater and they use woodchip mulch to conserve water and suppress weeds.



More information on workdays and more ways to get involved with Transition Telford can be found on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/transitiontelford/> and by contacting them at: transition.telford@gmail.com <https://transitiontelford.wordpress.com/>



Useful Links

[Grow Local - SGFP](#)

[Transition Telford](#)

[Severn Gorge Countryside Trust - Orchards](#)

<https://www.severngorge.org.uk/>

[STUWA - The Healthy Living Garden Project](#)

[Good to Grow](#) <https://www.sustainweb.org/goodtogrow>

YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4RHE4CfhZM>

Exploring a Bountiful Community Garden in Leegomery, Telford.

Learn Telford <https://learntelford.ac.uk/CourseSearch?keyword=Gardening>

[Gaia Seed Sovereignty](#) <https://www.seedsovereignty.info/>

[RHS Community gardening](#) <https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening>

<https://climateactionhub.org.uk/>

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/expert-advice>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=supEWhEBJXU> Glasbren Inspiring Small-Scale Market Garden's Approach to Connecting People with Food. Permaculture Ethics.

<https://www.soilassociation.org/>

<https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/podcast/in-conversation-with-tim-spector/> Tim Spector on microbiomes, human and soil health.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/nov/03/food-for-life-by-tim-spector-review-the-science-of-eating-well>

<https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/news-views/soil-stomach-plant/#:~:text=The%20layer%20of%20healthy%20topsoil,forms%20that%20plants%20can%20absorb.>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/17/dan-saladino-food-diversity>

<https://www.sustainweb.org/reports/sep23-the-fringe-farming-toolkit/#:~:text=The%20fringe%20farming%20toolkit%20is,support%20for%20agroecological%20food%20growing.>

<https://www.mvuf.org.uk/garden/> MeanWood Valley Urban Farm CSA

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37116658/#:~:text=Conclusions%3A%20Study%20results%20suggest%20that,consumption%20and%20decreasing%20UPF%20consumption.> Effects of a School-Based Gardening, Cooking, and Nutrition Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial on Unprocessed and Ultra-Processed Food Consumption

[Matthew R Jeans](#) ¹, [Matthew J Landry](#) ², [Sarvenaz Vandyousefi](#) ³, [Erin A Hudson](#) ¹,

<https://www.transitionwilmslow.co.uk/wilmslow-community-market-gardens>