

Renfrewshire Council
Allotments Annual Report for the Year 2018/19

Introduction:

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (Part 9) dealing with allotments, came into force on 1 April 2018 and encourages the Council to support the development of allotments and community growing spaces. This is aimed at improving health & well-being along with the creation of a sustainable food strategy.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide allotments and the Act imposes several obligations on the Council which has required the introduction of new procedures to ensure compliance with the legislation. This includes a requirement for the Council to prepare and publish an annual allotments report for Renfrewshire.

Provision of Allotments in Renfrewshire

In terms of the Act, an allotment is land owned or leased by the local authority, and used, at least mainly, for growing vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers, but without a view to making a profit. An allotment site is land consisting wholly or partly of allotments and includes other land which is owned or leased by the local authority, which may be used in connection with the use of the allotments.

The Act allows allotments to be 250 sqm in size, but also allows the flexibility to provide varied plot sizes to reflect local demand.

Renfrewshire Council has six Allotment / Growing Ground Associations who lease and occupy Council land, as summarised below:

Allotment Site	Association
Brediland Allotments, Paisley	Brediland Allotments Association
Grow in Glenburn, Paisley	Grow in Glenburn
West End Allotments, Paisley	West End Allotments Association
Sanctuary Gardens, Paisley	West End Growing Grounds Association
Broadloan Gardens, Renfrew	Renfrew Association of Growers & Gardeners
Erskine Community Allotments, Erskine	Erskine Community Allotments Association

The Council's Communities, Housing & Planning Service is the main point of contact for all 6 sites but does not directly manage any of the allotment sites. All aspects of the management, allocation and maintenance of the allotments are the responsibility of the respective Allotment Associations and their tenants. For example, the Associations are responsible for the day to day management of the site, such as managing the tenancies, accounts, and creating and governing their rules and

regulations. They also set the plot rents, which must be “fair” taking account of site variables such as the services provided and the cost of providing these services. The current rent payable for plots in Renfrewshire ranges from £10 - £30 per annum, depending upon the plot size.

At present, the sites have a combined total of 286 individual allotments or allotment plots, and the Council is aware of an aggregate total of 57 people awaiting allocation of an allotment, or allotment plot. This is below the statutory 50% ratio between waiting lists and plot numbers across Renfrewshire, which would require the Council to consider a new Allotment provision, although there is a potential local need for new allotments in Erskine despite an expansion of the Erskine Community Allotments site. The new legislation requires the Council to keep a waiting list and take reasonable steps to identify new allotment sites if demand increases, and waiting lists become longer. Most of the existing sites are fully occupied and have waiting lists and the Council is currently working with local Associations to promote and improve the provision of growing grounds in Renfrewshire to meet local demand. This includes the subdivision of plots and provision of raised beds, plus other measures to widen pathways and improve the accessibility to gardening opportunities for disabled people.

The Renfrewshire Food Growing Strategy 2020-25

The Council’s Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 20 January considered the Renfrewshire Food Growing Strategy 2020-25, a key purpose of which is to demonstrate how the Council will deliver its statutory duties for allotments and growing grounds. The strategy recognises the various local and national drivers that aim to improve the quality and quantity of growing grounds and sets out how these outcomes will be delivered in partnership with relevant stakeholders. The strategy lists a total of 27 community growing spaces in Renfrewshire, many of which have been developed as a result of collaborative community planning assisted by the Council and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership who jointly manage the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum.

By 2025, the aim of the strategy is to achieve the following outcomes:

- Residents living in Renfrewshire find it straightforward to apply for an allotment plot or community gardening opportunity.
- A co-ordinated waiting list system and regular monitoring processes introduced by the Council.
- Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum continues to be a valuable mechanism for community planning to satisfy local demands for growing opportunities.
- New community growing sites have been created in line with identified demands and gardeners with special needs being integrated successfully into the Renfrewshire community growing community.
- Facilities are being managed efficiently, fairly and sustainably because they have appropriate tenure arrangements for the levels of investment required and

their operations are covered by constitutions, rules and regulations which the Council has judged to be equitable and fair to all participants.

- An increased awareness of the thriving community growing scene locally, as a result of the joint initiatives undertaken by the Council and its community partners.

Annual Reporting Measures

Part 9, Section 121 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out the following specific measures that are to be included in the Allotments Annual report:

Item	Requirement
a	the location and size of each allotment site
b	the number of allotments on each allotment site
c	where the whole of an allotment site is leased from the authority by one person, the proportion of land on the allotment site that is not subleased from the tenant of the allotment site
d	where allotments on an allotment site are leased from the authority by more than one person, the proportion of land on the allotment site that is not leased from the authority
e	where an allotment site is leased by the local authority (i) the period of the lease of each allotment site, and (ii) the rent payable under the lease by the authority.
f	the period of any lease between the authority and the tenant of an allotment site
g	the rent payable under any lease between the authority and the tenant of an allotment site
h	the rent payable for each allotment in the area of the authority
i	how, in the opinion of the authority, such rents are decided by reference to the method of determining fair rent provided for in the regulations provided
j	the number of persons entered in the waiting list on the final day of the reporting year to which the report relates
k	the number of persons mentioned in paragraph (j) who, on the final day of the reporting year to which the report relates, have been entered in the list for a continuous period of more than 5 years
l	the steps taken by the authority to comply with the duty to provide allotments
m	reasons for any failure to comply with that duty
n	the number of allotments on each allotment site that are accessible by a disabled person
o	the number of allotments on each allotment site adjusted by the authority during the reporting year to meet the needs of a tenant who is a disabled person
p	the number of persons entered in the waiting list
q	the income received, and expenditure incurred, by the authority in connection with allotment sites; and
r	such other information as may be prescribed

The annual measures for 2018/19 (as at 14 November 2019) are provided in Table 1 below.

Funding for Community Projects

In March 2018, the Council established a Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) of £1.5 million which aims to support and develop community organisations with a specific focus on assisting those organisations that wish to acquire and develop a community asset. At that time, the Green Spaces, Parks and Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund of £1.87 million was also established by the Council to support communities develop, improve and use their local green spaces including allotments, growing grounds and community garden projects. A summary of the community organisations who have received awards from these funding sources during the reporting period is provided in Appendix 1.

Summary of Key Issues:

- The total area of the six allotment sites owned by the Council and leased to Allotment / Growing Ground Associations extends to 3.3 Ha, or thereby.
- There are 286 allotment plots (including raised beds). The number of plots has increased in recent years, mainly as a result of subdivision and provision of raised beds.
- The standard plot size of 250 sqm (as defined in legislation) does not represent the nature of local demand for growing spaces in Renfrewshire.
- There are 57 people currently on the waiting list, but no individual or group has been on the waiting list for five years.
- The Council is comfortably below the statutory 50% ratio between waiting lists and plot numbers across Renfrewshire, which would require the Council to consider a new Allotment provision, but there appears to be a shortfall in meeting the local demand for new allotments in Erskine where 33 people are currently on the waiting list.
- Plot rents are fair and vary from £10 per annum for a small plot, to £30 per annum for a large plot. The rents are decided by the local Allotment Association.
- The Renfrewshire Food Growing Strategy 2020-25 references a total of 27 community growing spaces in Renfrewshire and sets out how the Council aims to improve the quality and quantity of growing grounds in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
- Significant financial support is available to Community Associations / Allotment Associations to develop and improve growing grounds in Renfrewshire through the Community Empowerment Fund and Green Spaces, Parks and Play Parks and Villages Investment Fund.

Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2018/19 Summary

TABLE 1

Item	Information required	Allotment Sites					
		Brediland Allotments	Broadloan Gardens	Erskine Community Allotments	Grow in Glenburn	Sanctuary Garden,	West End Allotments
a (i)	Site location	Cardell Drive, Paisley	Broadloan, Renfrew	Barwood Road, Erskine	Glen Park, Glenfield Rd, Paisley	Underwood Rd, Paisley	Douglas Street Paisley
a (ii)	Site size	0.9 ha	0.4 ha	0.9 ha	0.4 ha	0.3 ha	0.4 ha
b	No. plots	63	52	44	35	69	23
c	Percentage of the site not subleased	17% (doocots)	0%	0%	21% (habitat)	18% (car park)	6% (tyre store)
d	No. of Plots let directly to growers (Nil)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
e	Sites leased by the Council (Nil)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
f	Lease period to association	Annual	20 years	25 years	10 years	11 months, then Annual	Annual
g	Rent payable to Renfrewshire Council (RC)	£1 if asked	£1 if asked	£1 if asked	£1 if asked	£1 if asked	£1 if asked
h	Plot rents (£)	Large: £25 Med: £20 Small: £15	Large: £30. Small: £20	£20 full plot; £10 half plot.	£15 per plot. £10 per raised bed.	£20 for 2 beds. Group rate £60 for 4 beds.	Large: £20. Small: £10.
i	How rents are decided	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM
j	Waiting list numbers RC list: 11 Total: 57 (as at 14.11.19)	5	6	33	0	0	2

Item	Information required	Allotment Sites					
		Brediland Allotments	Broadloan Gardens	Erskine Community Allotments	Grow in Glenburn	Sanctuary Garden,	West End Allotments
k	No. of people on waiting list for 5 or more years	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
l	Steps taken by Council to reduce waiting lists	Work with nearby Foxbar group + CEF grants to WEGGA	tbc		5 recent enquirers will be placed over the winter	Plots still vacant	Very recent enquiry. CEF grants to support WEGGA
m	Reasons for failure to comply with (l) above.	N/A	First time waiting list has occurred at this site.	ECAA want adjacent land, not remote from site.	N/A	N/A	N/A
n	No. plots accessible to a disabled person	N/A. (5 members class themselves as disabled).	N/A. (3 members identify themselves as disabled)	N/A. (2 disabled groups with a plot each).	N/A. (Request for raised beds and improved access).	N/A. (currently 2 disabled members)	N/A.
o	No. plots adjusted by RC to meet needs of disabled persons	Nil.	Nil. Need identified to widen access paths.	Ni. Plot holders adding their own raised beds.	Nil	Nil	Nil
p	No. people applying for adapted plot or for adjustment to existing	Nil	Nil	One disabled group asked for some raised beds	Nil	Nil	Nil
q	i) Income received: ii) Expenditure incurred (by the Council).	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil
r	AOB prescribed by Scot Government	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Renfrewshire Council Grant Awards 2018/19

APPENDIX 1

Allotment Associations and Growing Ground Associations

1. Community Empowerment Fund

Award	Organisation	Date	Purpose
£20,000	West End Growing Gardens Association (WEGGA)	August 2018	To relocate Sutherland Street growing grounds to Underwood Road, Paisley (including costs of raised beds, polytunnels, a standpipe and container).
£10,000	Foxbar Community Garden and Environmental Projects Group	August 2019	For a feasibility study to support the business plan to create a community garden and hub facility on the site of the former St Paul's Primary School in Foxbar, Paisley.
£30,000	WEGGA	October 2019	To support the early stages of a community garden project in Carbrook Street, Paisley (i.e. soil and ground tests and connecting utilities). Conditional on match funding of £30K being secured to ensure the viability of the project.
£4,250	WEGGA	As above	The award represents an additional grant towards the rising costs of the Underwood Road growing grounds project. WEGGA also secured additional in-kind support from Sanctuary Housing.

2. Green Spaces, Parks and Play Parks and Villages Investment Fund

Award	Organisation	Date	Purpose
£4,800	Erskine Community Garden	October 2019	Enhancement of existing garden with the provision of orchard trees, raised beds, a labyrinth and tools for children
£2,609	West End Growing Gardens Association (WEGGA)	As above	Provision of grounds maintenance equipment for Sanctuary Gardens, Underwood Road, Paisley
£400	Darkwood Crew	As above	To assist with planning application for a community garden on the "Village Green" behind the Falcon Day Centre in Ferguslie Park, Paisley. A further £4,400 will be released on approval of planning consent.