

# Allotments Annual Report 2020



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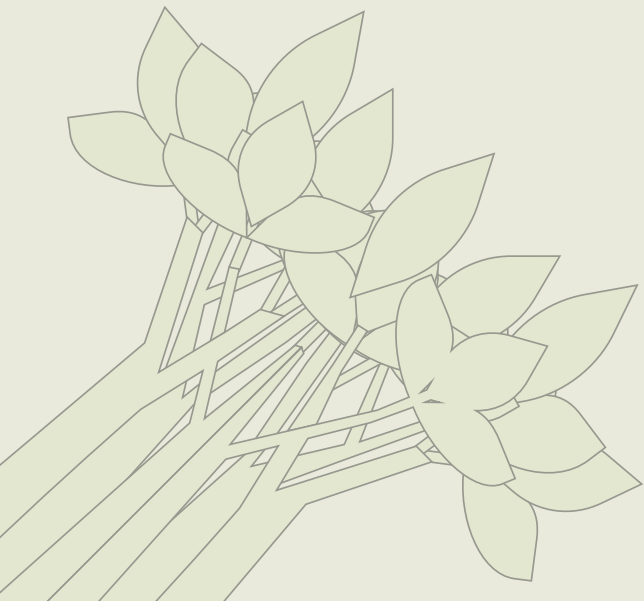
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## Introduction

Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, with provisions relating to allotments, came into force on 1 April 2018. The Act encourages Local Authorities to support the development of allotments and community growing spaces, recognising their contribution to health and well-being, environmental sustainability and community empowerment.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide allotments under the provisions of the Act and a number of associated duties which have 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

The Act defines an allotment as land owned or leased by the local authority and used, at least mainly, for growing vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers, 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 m<sup>2</sup> 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:

Table 1: Allotment Sites Leased by Renfrewshire Council

Allotment Site	Association
Brediland Allotments, Paisley	Brediland Allotments Association
Grow in Glenburn, Glenfield Road, 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

In 2020 the Council's Communities, Housing & Planning Service remained the main point of contact for all six sites, but Renfrewshire Council 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.

The Associations are responsible for the day-to-day management of the sites, 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 338 individual allotments or allotment plots, and the Council is aware of an aggregate total of 107 people awaiting allocation of an allotment or allotment plot. This is below the statutory 50% ratio between waiting lists and plot numbers across Renfrewshire, the threshold which would require the Council to consider a new Allotment provision.

The 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 with waiting lists and as a result 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 Communities, Housing and Planning Board approved the Renfrewshire Food Growing Strategy 2020-25 on 20 January 2020. The Strategy provides a framework to assist in increasing the quantity and quality of growing opportunities in Renfrewshire, as well as setting out how the Council will deliver its statutory duties for allotments and growing grounds over the five year period.

The strategy recognises the various local and national drivers that seek to improve the quality and quantity of growing grounds and sets out how these outcomes will be delivered in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

Reflecting this partnership approach the document lists a total of 27 community growing spaces in Renfrewshire, many of which have been developed as a result of collaborative working with community groups, the Council and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, who jointly manage the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum.

The strategy can be viewed on the Council's website at the following address:-

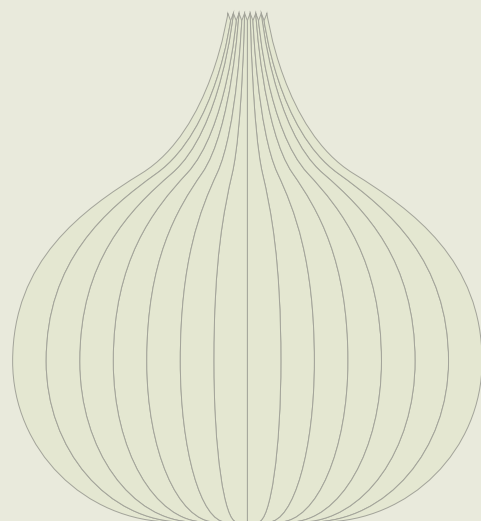
<https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10464/Community-Growing>



## 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: Table 2: Annual Reporting Measures.

The annual measures for 2020 (as reported at the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum online meeting on 18 November 2020) are provided in Table 3 below.



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 (excluding any other land owned or leased by the authority that may be used by tenants of allotments in connection with their use of allotments) 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 (excluding any other land owned or leased by the authority that may be used by tenants of allotments in connection with their use of allotments) 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 whose request included information about their needs on disability grounds re access, and possible adjustments, to an allotment site or allotment..
Q	The income received, and expenditure incurred, by the authority in connection with allotment sites; and
R	such other information as may be prescribed.

Table 2: Annual Reporting Measures





## Renfrewshire Council's Allotment Regulations

Section 115 and 116 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act required each local authority to make allotment site regulations by 1 April 2020. This requirement was progressed in close consultation with the affected groups and through the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum, so that the existing practice of devolved decision making could be protected, formally recognised, and reinforced in relation to the day-to-day allotment management of individual sites. The allotment associations and community gardening groups value their independence and Renfrewshire Council was keen to endorse this approach.

The Council's Infrastructure, Land & Environment Board of 18 March 2020 approved the proposed Renfrewshire Allotment Site Regulations for public consultation. A four-week consultation period followed and involved advertisements in the Paisley & Renfrewshire Gazette, publication on the Council's website and on social media channels, as well as direct contact with the six directly affected allotment sites and emails to all organisations on the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum circulation list.

The results of the consultation exercise were reported back to Board on 26 August 2020. The regulations were positively received, approved and then published on the Renfrewshire Council website, as required by the legislation.





## Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 national lockdown started on 23 March 2020. The UK and Scottish Governments' recognised from an early stage that plot maintenance was a valid form of permissible daily exercise which could proceed on allotment and community garden sites as long as appropriate social distancing and infection control measures were undertaken, including number restrictions, hand sanitiser dispensers, closure of shared indoor spaces and withdrawal of shared tools provision.

The extra time some people had available, largely as a result of the furlough scheme, led to some group representatives commenting that the standard of plot maintenance was higher during 2020. However, some growers could not tend their plots because they were shielded at home. Management committees made special arrangements to help people in these circumstances.

Contact was maintained with growing groups via the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum, through email exchanges and one online meeting in November 2020. Outcomes from engagement with groups identified that other key effects of Covid-19 on community food growing sites had been:

- inability to organise communal work parties to maintain shared spaces on the sites
- similarly, planned site improvements depending on group voluntary inputs had to be deferred
- inability to access the Council-run Unpaid Work Teams for heavy works, deliveries of compost, etc.
- restrictions on site visitors meant that fund-raising open days could not be held.
- education programmes had to be paused.
- difficulty in holding AGMs and other committee meetings where members were unfamiliar with remote online alternatives or not equipped to participate.
- committees spent more time preparing and circulating newsletters or phoning to keep in touch with members.
- significant increase in waiting lists during the year.

In addition, the Paisley Florists Society Gardening Club, which does not run a site but performs key educational and peer advice functions, had to cancel its programme of monthly meetings and the annual Paisley Flower Show at St. Mirin's Cathedral, normally a signature event for community growing in Renfrewshire.





## Funding for Community Projects

In March 2018, the Council established a Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) of £1.5 million which aims to support community organisations that wish to acquire and develop community assets. A Green Spaces, Parks and Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund of £1.87 million was also established to support communities to develop, improve and use their local green spaces - including allotments, growing grounds and community garden projects.

In 2019 these sources had allocated a total of £72,059 for community food projects in Renfrewshire. The impact of Covid-19 on community growing in 2020, set out above, meant that it was more difficult for allotment associations and community gardening groups to develop projects to the funding application stage. Therefore, the level of activity was much lower in 2020.

Some projects did make early progress towards potential funding awards and a small number received grant allocations through their respective Local Partnerships. These are summarised 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 **338** 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.



There were **107** people on the waiting list at the end of 2020, 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.



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.



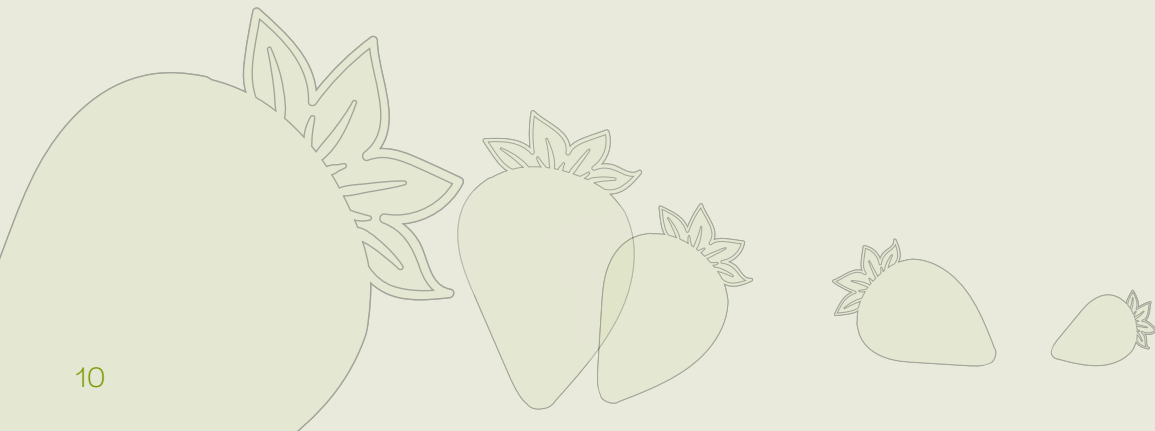
The Renfrewshire Food Growing Strategy 2020-25 references a total of 27 community growing spaces in Renfrewshire and sets out how the Council aims to improve the quality and quantity of growing grounds in partnership with relevant stakeholders.



Significant financial support remains available to Community Associations / Allotment Associations to develop and improve growing grounds in Renfrewshire through the Community Empowerment Fund, Green Spaces, Parks and Play Parks and Villages Investment Fund and, in some cases, Local Partnerships which have identified open space enhancements as a local priority for support.



Renfrewshire Council has developed and published Allotment Regulations – in compliance with Sections 115 and 116 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – which support the aims and aspirations of allotment associations and other community food growing organisations in the area.





**Table 3: Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2020 - Summary**

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	Number of plots	63	65	44	44 (comprising 23 plots at 5x5m, 5 plots at 2x2m and 16 raised beds).	108	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 "Starter": £15 Community groups: £0 (5 groups had plots)	£20 full plot; £10 half plot	£25 per plot. £12.50 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

Table 3: Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2020 - Summary Continued

Item	Information required	Allotment Sites					
		Brediland Allotments	Broadloan Gardens	Erskine Community Allotments	Grow in Glenburn	Sanctuary Garden	West End Allotments
J	Waiting list numbers RC list: 18 Total: 107 (as at 18.11.20)	17	10	52	2	0	8
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	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Plots still vacant	Nil
M	Reasons for failure to comply with (I) above.	Affected by Covid-19 restrictions	Affected by Covid-19 restrictions	Affected by Covid-19 restrictions	Affected by Covid-19 restrictions	N/A	Affected by Covid-19 restrictions
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.	Nil. Plot holders adding their own raised beds.	Nil	Nil	Nil
P	No. people applying for adapted plot or for adjustment to existing	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Q	i) Income received: ii) Expenditure incurred (by the Council).	£1	£1	£1	£1	£1	£1
		£Nil	£Nil	£Nil	£Nil	£Nil	£Nil
R	AOB prescribed by Scot Government	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

## APPENDIX 1 - Renfrewshire Council Grant Awards 2020

### Allotment Associations and Growing Ground Associations

#### 1 Community Empowerment Fund

No new applications in 2020 reached the stage at which they would have been submitted for approval by the Communities, Housing & Planning Policy Board. The Fund remained open through 2020 and should start to see renewed interest from community growing groups in 2021.

Award	Receiving Organisation	Date	Purpose
The Fund allows eligible Community Transfer Bodies to apply for support of up to £5,000 for feasibility investigations into potential community gardens and then up to £50,000 to deliver the resulting project.	So far, all applying community gardening groups in Renfrewshire have been accepted as eligible Community Transfer Bodies under the legislation	Ongoing	To help community groups to take on Council assets successfully and deliver initiatives which benefit their local communities.

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

Restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic meant that none of the community growing groups were able to develop projects to the stage at which applications could be placed before the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board for approval. The Board meeting on 10 March 2020 had received a report indicating that local groups were seeking to develop community growing grounds in Foxbar, Linwood and Elderslie and that further reports would follow. The Emergencies Board then operated from March to August 2020, so that the next Communities, Housing & Planning Policy Board was not until 18 August, and no new applications were submitted at this stage.

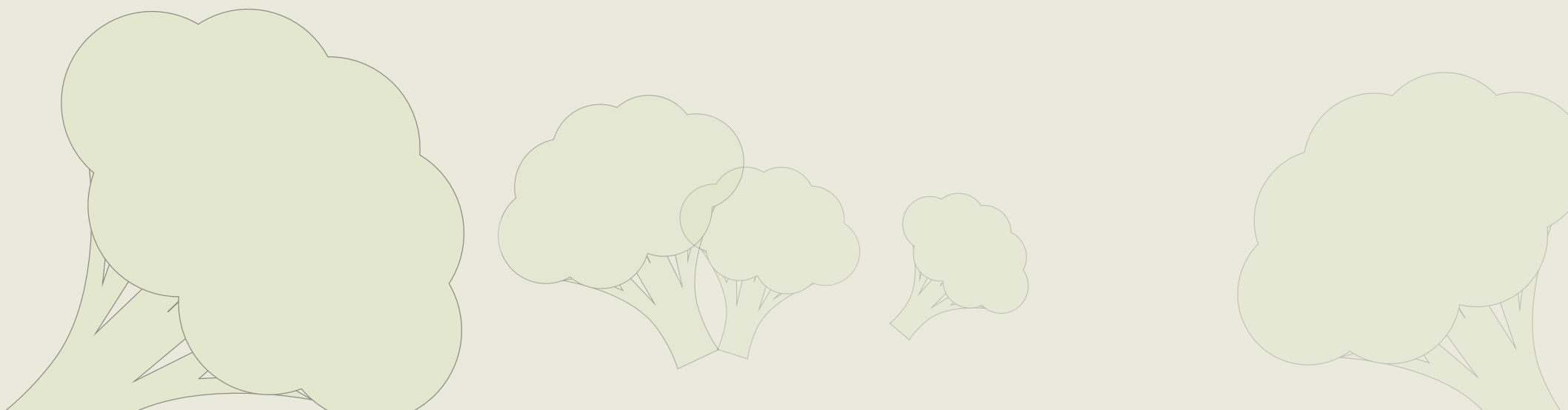
Award	Receiving Organisation	Date	Purpose
£0	-	2020	-



### 3. Local Partnerships

In some cases, Local Partnerships have identified open space enhancements as a local priority for support, meaning that they are able to offer grants towards local community projects in the growing sector. Successful applications to Local Partnerships were as follows:

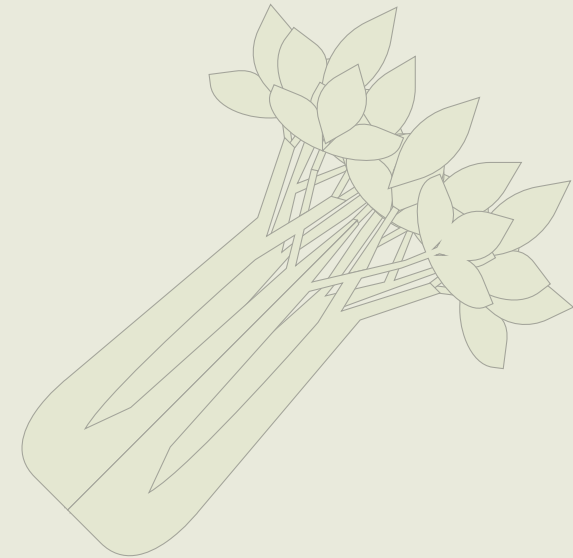
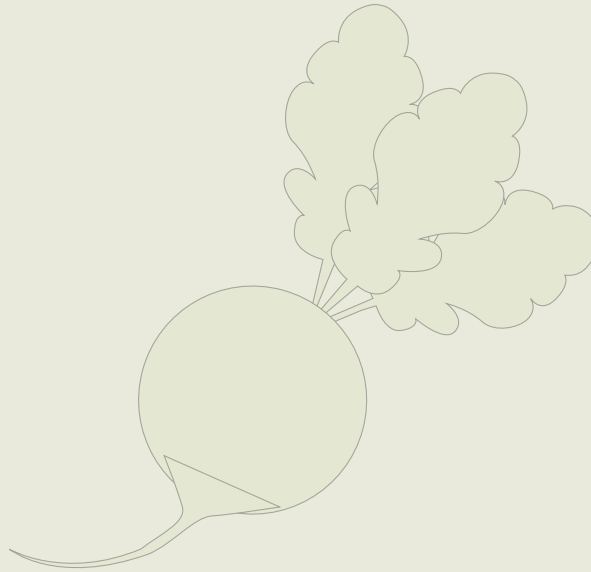
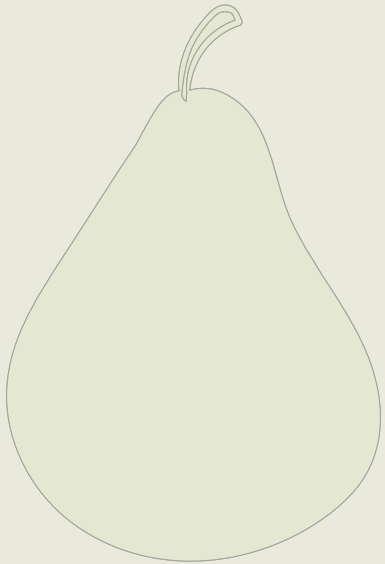
Award	Receiving Organisation	Date	Purpose
£2,000 by Renfrew Local Partnership	Renfrew Association of Growers and Gardeners (RAGG)	23rd September 2020	To support “Wee Green Fingers” educational programme
£5,650 by Paisley East Local Partnership	The Buddies of Hunterhill	29th September 2020	To support development of Hunterhill Care Home’s dementia friendly garden.
£3,535 by Paisley North, West & Central Local Partnership	West End Growing Grounds Association (WEGGA)	15th September 2020	To support purchase and installation of a composting toilet for disabled people.











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