

PLACES TO GROW

In many cases, community growing projects are born 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 actively search for any potentially suitable sites. In all cases though, there are a few approaches which can be taken to try to identify potential sites, with it always being worth looking at all potential options, as the first identified site may not ultimately be the most suitable or attainable when compared to alternatives.

- [Social Farms and Gardens Scotland](#) can provide connections between people looking to start growing in the community and existing growing projects in an area, and/or landowners interested in making land available for projects of this nature, with there potentially being opportunities for new people to get involved in an existing project rather than start a new one, or to learn from an existing project's experience in terms of the availability of land for community growing use in the area.
- If looking for land, another good starting point is to find out if the local authority has prepared a Local Food Growing Strategy, or if it is in the process of preparing one, and what areas of land are identified in that as having potential for food growing use, as well who at the Council might be able to provide support to any proposed new food growing projects.
- There are many successful examples of vacant land and under-utilised open spaces being re-purposed for community growing and, to help overcome the hurdle of identifying who to contact to access such land, see '[Who Owns the Land](#).' CLAS Scotland may also be able to provide further advice and support in this area if required.
- Another potential source of land is new open spaces which may need to be provided as part of any new developments in the area, and where new developments are proposed, it is worth contacting the Council's planning department to ask about the potential for growing space to be incorporated into this.

The nature of the land that has been identified and who owns it will then influence, for example:

What kind of arrangement might be most appropriate – i.e., whether it would be better for the site to be owned by the community, or leased, and on what terms.

The route to getting that arrangement in place – i.e., whether this can be negotiated, or whether it might be necessary to seek to exercise a community right to buy, or to make an asset transfer request.

What other regulatory requirements might need to be considered – i.e., whether planning permission might be needed before land can be used for community growing purposes.

Further details on all these matters are then provided in the relevant sections on these but, in all cases, the key first steps are set out in 'Getting Started', and this should be read in full before looking at any of the other sections in detail.