



North Lanarkshire Community Climate Action Project: Community Food Growing Guide

March 2024



VANL (SCIO) is registered as Scottish Charity no. SC041224

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Acknowledgement: Written by Munro Fraser and Maddy Halliday, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire

Introduction to Our Community Climate Action Guides

Most people are now aware of our climate and nature emergencies (see below for more information). The scale and causes of our climate and linked nature challenges can seem overwhelming and their causes distant from us. We might feel unsure about what we can do as individuals or with others in our families, communities or workplaces.

Fortunately there are many things we **can do** to help reduce our individual **and** collective negative impact on the climate and nature and contribute to solutions that will also improve our physical and mental health, social, economic and environmental fairness and inclusion.

This Guide provides brief, accessible, information on how people and communities in Lanarkshire could contribute to community-led action to support community food growing.

This guide is complemented by 5 others, listed below on the broad climate topics which are intended to help people in Lanarkshire take action to be part of the solution to our climate and nature challenges.

You can access the guides from the [ACT Now NL website](#).



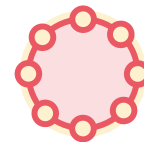
Active Travel & Community Transport



Community-led Greening and Conservation



Community-owned Renewable Energy



Community Sharing and Upcycling



Green Home Energy

The Guides are part of the [North Lanarkshire Community Climate Action Project](#), co-ordinated by [Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire](#) as part of our contribution to Action on Climate Together North Lanarkshire and the Lanarkshire Green Health Partnership. These guides are also supported by Community Climate Champions who can support community workshops and conversations and our Community Climate Action Pledge which supports community and voluntary sector organisations.

What are the Climate and Nature Emergencies?

The world is facing a climate emergency due to human's use of fossil fuels such as oil and gas to provide energy. Human activity is also destroying and polluting the natural world - water, air, plants and animals - on which human and all other life depends.

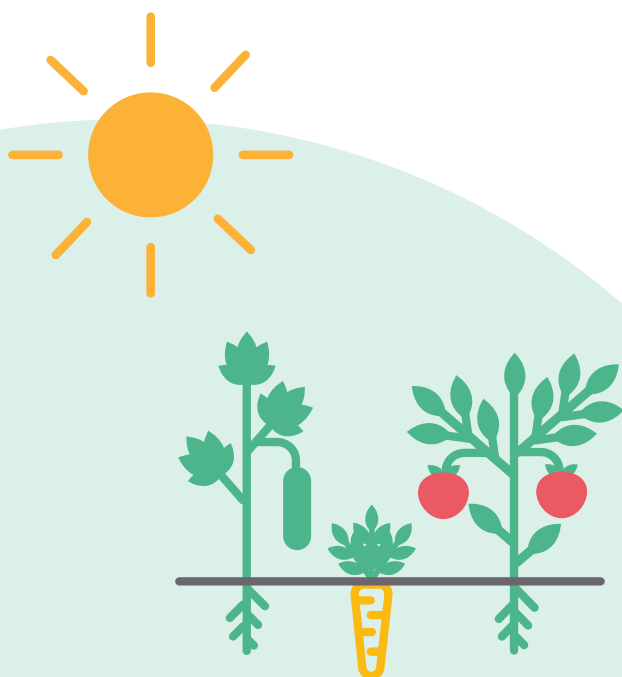
As a result everywhere in the world is now experiencing adverse climate changes, such as rising temperatures and

increased flooding and harm to our natural world such as deforestation; air and water pollution; loss of plants and animals. These challenges are adversely affecting all of us. Fortunately, awareness of these problems and action to solve them is increasing. These guides are intended to help people in Lanarkshire take action to be part of the solution to our climate and nature challenges.

Introduction to Community Food Growing

Growing food locally - as a household and/or as a community - is a great way to support affordable, nutritious and climate and nature-friendly food provision. In addition to supporting affordable, healthy diets, community food growing also helps to protect and improve our physical and mental health and supports social inclusion in many other ways as outlined below.

- ➔ Supporting food security, social inclusion and equality by providing affordable plant foods that may cost more or not be readily available through mainstream suppliers.
- ➔ Reducing the use of fertilisers and pesticides that are harmful to human health and also other plants and animals by using organic growing methods
- ➔ Providing improved opportunities for physical activity, connection with nature and social support
- ➔ Reducing air and water pollution – plants help to break down and filter some of the pollutants we produce
- ➔ Reducing air temperature and providing cool green, spaces during hot weather – as plants and green spaces provide shade
- ➔ Reducing flood risk as soil and plants absorb water.



Community food growing also supports action to tackle both the climate and nature emergencies by:

- ➔ Storing carbon through soil and the plants we grow - reducing the amount of carbon in our atmosphere, which is the cause of climate change
- ➔ Increasing the local diversity of plants, fungi, insects, birds and mammals

Climate change is already impacting on food-growing in Scotland due to warmer and wetter weather, which affects what foods can be grown and when they can be planted and harvested. This means that it may now be possible to grow foods outdoors in your area that may have been difficult to grow previously without a greenhouse.

However, it could also be more difficult to reliably grow some foods outdoors that were grown previously.

Despite these challenges, it is possible for our community food growing activities - whether in gardens, allotments, orchards - to adapt to the changing climate for example by:

- ➔ Improving drainage and water storage
- ➔ Ensuring the plants grown are suitable for local weather conditions
- ➔ Placing plants in the right location to provide sufficient sun and shade

Inspiring Examples of Community Food Growing



North Lanarkshire Green Map: this interactive green map provides information on over 20 allotments and community gardens from across North Lanarkshire.



Clydesdale Food Growing Network: (CCI) is an award-winning social inclusion charity and social enterprise in South Lanarkshire. CCI supports people facing barriers to develop skills and confidence whilst contributing to their local community through a market garden and other activities. Based at Langloch Farm just outside Lanark, staff and volunteers grow and sell a seasonal selection of plants, vegetables and herbs. CCI also provides a tearoom, gift shop, outdoor play event facilities so provides a valuable community hub as well as provider of locally-grown, healthy food.



Glasgow Community Food Network: (GCFN) was established in 2017 to bring together practitioners and organisations in the community and voluntary, business and public sectors to develop a flourishing, local food system in Glasgow. The network involves a wide range of people including foodbank and soup kitchen volunteers; chefs and restaurants; farmers and market gardeners with the aim of supporting provision of local, high quality, fresh, organic and affordable food.

Approaches to Community Food Growing*

*This section should be read in conjunction with guidance provided in our guide on Community-led Greening and Nature Conservation.

Community food growing activities are diverse and include community allotments, gardens, market-gardens, farms and orchards. Each of these opportunities can vary in scale and approach. For example:

- ➔ Using small or larger areas of land
- ➔ Using land owned by the community or rented from another landowner
- ➔ Growing a limited range of produce – such as a community orchard - or a wider variety of foods
- ➔ Growing only native plants or growing a wider range of suitable plants
- ➔ Growing organically or not

- ➔ Providing food for people involved in the initiative only and/or for other local people
- ➔ Providing the community-grown food grown for free to local people or charging to cover costs and support ongoing provision
- ➔ Operating as an independent community group; charity or social enterprise or as part of a larger, existing group, charity or social enterprise
- ➔ Involving a few or many volunteers
- ➔ Involving no or some paid staff

There may already be one or more community food growing initiatives in your area that need more support and/or there may be opportunities to establish new initiatives. The best way to find out how to strengthen community food growing in your area is to run a workshop and guidance is provided below.

Sources of Further Information and Support

[Farming for a Better Climate](#)

[Food for Life Get Togethers](#)

[Garden Organic](#)

[Get Growing Scotland](#)

[Glasgow Food](#)

[Going Green Together - Food](#)

[Incredible Edible](#)

[Lanarkshire Climate Hub](#)

[Landworkers Alliance Scotland](#)

[Love Food Hate Waste](#)

[North Lanarkshire Council
Community-food-growing-and-allotments](#)

[North Lanarkshire Council
Food Growing Strategy](#)

[Nourish Scotland](#)

[Orchard Network](#)

[Propagate](#)

[Scottish Allotments and Garden Society](#)

[Social Farms and Gardens
Scotland](#)

[Trellis
Scotland's network for therapeutic gardening](#)

[Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire
*For support in setting up or running a community
organisation, charity or social enterprise.*](#)

[*For volunteering support*](#)

Running a Community Food Growing Workshop

Purpose:

to bring local community groups and residents together to explore ways of strengthening community food growing in their local area.

Organised and facilitated by:

one or more local community group/s

- If you would like help from one of our North Lanarkshire "Climate Action Champions" – please contact info@vanl.co.uk
- You might also want to involve someone with appropriate technical knowledge and skills – see information and resources section above

Suggested materials and resources:

- Flip-chart paper and stand; pens, markers; blue tack etc.
- A large scale, printed map of the local area you are exploring
- A list of existing community food growing initiatives
- A computer with internet connection



Time: Approx. 2 - 3 hours. Including a 15 min. break with refreshments.



Participants: anyone who wants to participate but best to try to keep numbers to a manageable size of between 5-25.



Format: ideally an in-person event in a community venue but could be done online if this is necessary.



Note-taking/flip-charting of key points and ideas: by facilitator or others

Welcome, Introductions and Envisioning



 Approx. 30 mins

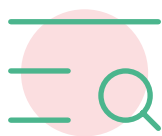
Facilitator to introduce themselves and welcome all to the workshop inviting them to introduce themselves and:

- To share what brings them here
- What vision they have for strengthening community food growing in their community
- What experience, skills or resources they can bring

Facilitator to reflect back to the group any common visions/ideas that seem to have emerged and seek feedback from the group.

Running a Community Food Growing Workshop

Reviewing and Mapping



 Approx. 45 mins

The facilitator will support the group to undertake the following activities.

Review Local Community Food Growing Initiatives and Opportunities

- Discuss current initiatives and how these could be strengthened.
- Review land in your local area using the large-scale map highlighting spaces where new community food growing could take place. Consider public and private land such as parks; vacant sites; trails, roadside areas – and even rooftops! (NB: further work to identify who owns the land and access issues will be required at a later date.)
- Discuss opportunities for new community food growing initiatives using available land.

Mapping Allies

Identify potential allies in the community and who will approach them to build support, including:

- Existing community food growing groups
- Other community groups of all types, e.g. youth groups; regeneration projects;
- Experienced gardeners/growers
- School headteachers
- Local councillors, MSPs, MPs

Mapping Resources

Map available or potentially available resources in more detail, including:

- Large private gardens, allotments and green spaces.
- Availability of seeds, plants and soil
- Availability of tools and materials like fencing and storage

Don't forget to have a 15 min break either at this point or a bit earlier.

Action Planning

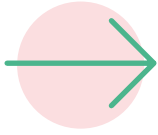



 Approx. 30 mins

Now that the participants have explored their vision, options and resources, the facilitator will help them agree what they want to do in their community to strengthen community food growing.

Running a Community Food Growing Workshop

Next Steps and Closing



 Approx. 15 mins

- Facilitator to help the group decide how their agreed actions will be taken forward - e.g. another meeting; when; who will organise this
- Facilitator to ask the group to reflect on how the workshop went and ask each participant to share one thing they will be taking away from the session
- Thanks, and close