

To: Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board

On: 23 March 2022

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Renfrewshire Allotments Annual Report 2021

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Board of the Council's Allotments Annual Report for 2021. The report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under Section 121 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:
- (i) Approves the Renfrewshire Annual Allotments Report 2021.
 - (ii) Notes that subject to Board approval, the report will be published on the Renfrewshire Council website in accordance with statutory requirements.
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3. Background

- 3.1. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (Part 9) relates to allotments and encourages Councils to support the development of allotments and community growing spaces, recognising their contribution to health and well-being, sustainable local food production and community empowerment.
- 3.2. The Council has a statutory duty to provide allotments under the provisions of the Act and a number of associated duties, including the requirement for the publication of an annual allotments report. The report for 2020 was approved by the Board on 10 November 2021.

4. **Renfrewshire Annual Allotment Report 2021**

- 4.1. The report provides a summary of allotment provision in Renfrewshire over 2021, in accordance with the specific measures set out in Section 121 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 4.2. The Act requires the Council to establish and maintain a list of all persons who request an allotment. Renfrewshire Council has six Allotment/Growing Ground Associations who lease and occupy Council land as set out in the table below. The sites had a total of 351 individual growing plots and 120 people awaiting allocation of an allotment or growing plot at the final meeting of the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum in October 2021.

Table 1 Renfrewshire allotment sites and associations

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

- 4.3 The number of those awaiting allotments has risen by 13 since the end of 2020 but the total remains below the statutory 50% ratio between waiting lists and plot numbers across Renfrewshire which would require the Council to consider additional allotment provision under Section 112 of the Act. It is however intended to engage with local communities in the preparation of the new Local Development Plan to assess possible sites to meet demand across various communities in Renfrewshire.
- 4.4 Continuing progress has been made in addressing the Council's additional statutory duties under the Act over 2021. This has included identifying growing opportunities for new groups, encouraging existing groups to promote community food growing through the online Paisley Food Festival 2021 and seeking new occupiers for recently vacated growing sites.
- 4.5 The Annual Allotments Report also considers the continuing impact of the Covid pandemic over the last year, recognising the positive mental and physical health benefits for plot holders and some of the challenges faced by allotment and community garden associations in relation to communal management, educational and fund-raising activities.

- 4.6 The Council will continue to support local Allotment and Growing Ground Associations in the delivery of growing opportunities through the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum and annual updates will be reported to the Board as appropriate, in accordance with statutory requirements.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.
 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
 3. **Community Planning** –

Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy – The Annual Allotments Report 2021 sets out how the Council is progressing statutory duties in relation to allotments, supporting opportunities for local food growing, developing our outdoor spaces and contributing to healthier lifestyles.
 4. **Legal** – None.
 5. **Property/Assets** – None.
 6. **Information Technology** – None.
 7. **Equality & Human Rights**
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
 8. **Health & Safety** – None.
 9. **Procurement** – None.
 10. **Risk** – None.
 11. **Privacy Impact** – None.
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.
 13. **Climate Risk** - Community food growing contributes positively to Renfrewshire Council's carbon neutrality targets, particularly through lower levels of CO₂ emissions as a result of reduced "food miles".
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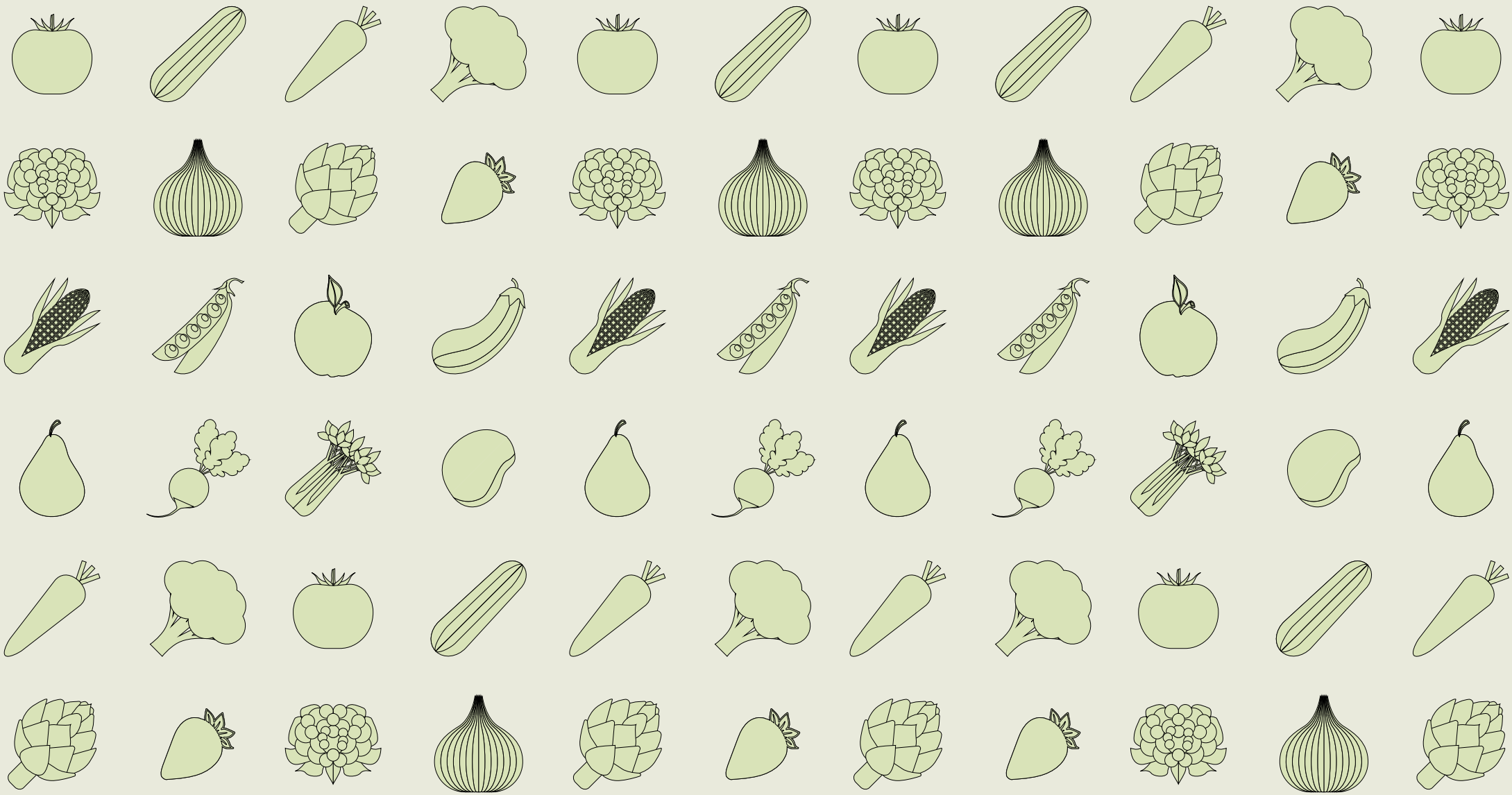
Appendices

1. Renfrewshire Annual Allotments Report 2021

List of Background Papers

- (a) Housing, Community and Planning Board 20 January 2020 - Renfrewshire Food Growing Strategy 2020-25
- (b) Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board 03 November 2021 – Allotments Annual Report 2020

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Renfrewshire Council
Allotments Annual Report 2021





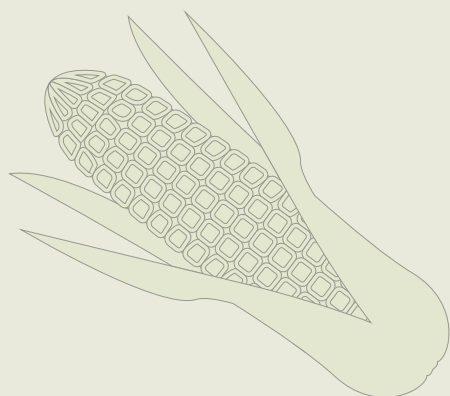
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Introduction

Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, covering 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, 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 m² 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, 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 2021 the Council's Chief Executive's Service became the main point of contact for all 6 sites through the Economy & Development Team, 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 351 individual allotments or allotment plots, and the Council is aware of an aggregate total of 120 people awaiting allocation of an allotment, or allotment plot. This is a slight increase from the previous annual report total of 107 but remains 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 and other community groups 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 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:-

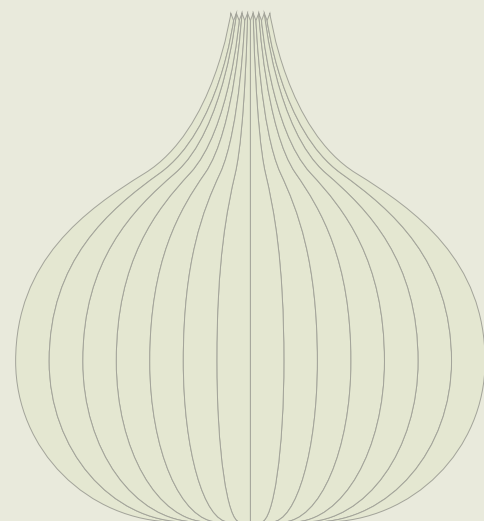
<https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10464/Community-Growing>



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:

The annual measures for 2021 (as reported at the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum online meeting on 7 October 2021) are provided in Table 3 on page 11.



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



Continuing Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The first 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, 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 had been higher during 2020. This trend was also noted in 2021, with various restrictions remaining in place. On the other hand, 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, and through email exchanges and two online meetings. 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 were paused;
- 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 until the autumn.
- education programmes had to be discontinued.
- inability to hold 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.
- continuing overall increase in waiting lists during the year.
- in contrast to the above, one association noted that some new members gave up their plots after only a couple of months.

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.

Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum – 2021 Activities

Despite the impacts of the pandemic, the Council has continued to provide support and guidance through the Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum. Two online meetings of the Forum were held in 2021 and enabled the sharing of information, provision of advice on statutory guidance and assistance to local growing organisations.

These efforts supported the following outcomes:-

- Two local groups were able to participate in the online 2021 Paisley Food Festival from 15th – 24th April, with Media students from West College Scotland providing filming and photography assistance.
- Erskine Community Allotments Association was able to report that a CBeebies film crew had spent a week filming at their allotment garden, for an episode of the children's programme "Molly and Mack", which had not been possible in 2020.
- The charitable organisation Pachedu, which works with minority groups, had been put in touch with WEGGA and had taken over a vacant double plot at the Sanctuary Garden in Paisley for its members who were interested in growing vegetables.
- A presentation about the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland and NHS funded Covid Community Memorial Programme was provided by OneRen's Place Partnership and a number of local growing groups had expressed an interest in participating.
- On-site meetings were held to assist in finding new occupiers for the Green Buds Community Garden in Paisley, which the Renfrewshire Learning Disabilities Service could no longer maintain, at the same time potentially providing service expansion opportunities for Barnardo's and a new site for the Grow in Glenburn group.



Erskine Community Allotments

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 by the Council at that time 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. Covid-19 associated problems in 2020 and 2021, set out above, meant that allotment associations and community gardening groups could not get together as readily to develop projects to the funding application stage. Therefore, the level of activity continued to be reduced in 2021.

Some projects did make good progress towards potential funding awards and 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.



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.



There are 351 allotment plots (including raised beds). The number of plots increased by four in 2021, as a result of additional raised beds being created at the Sanctuary Garden in Paisley.



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.



There were 120 people on the waiting list at the end of 2021, but no individual or group has been on the waiting list for five years.



Significant financial support remained available to community groups and 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.



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.

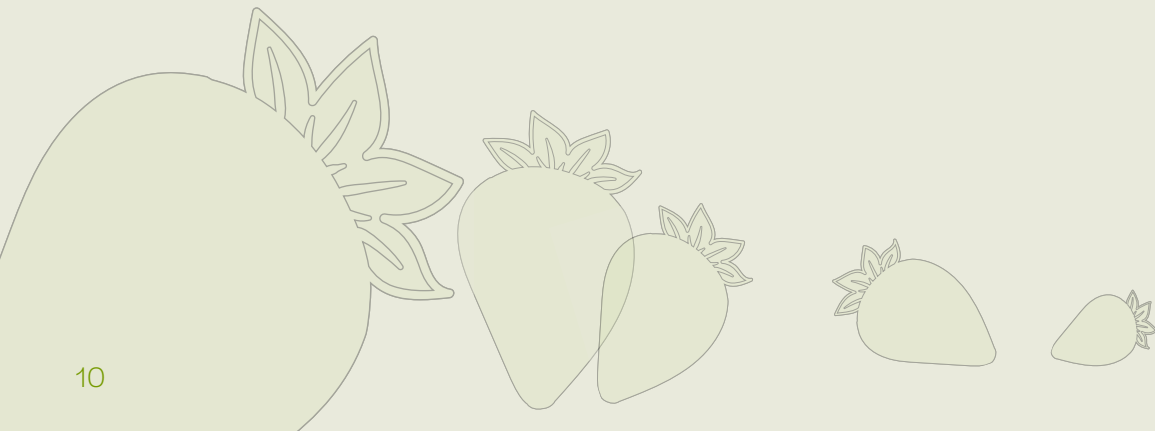


Table 3: Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2021 - Summary

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 (plus 8 outside boxes not included in total)	65	44	44 (comprising 23 plots at 5x5m, 5 plots at 2x2m and 16 raised beds).	112 (plus 4 polytunnel beds not included in the total)	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	Not yet in place but 25-year term requested by Association.	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.	£30 for double raised bed plot. Group rate £34 for double raised bed. (Polytunnel beds £15)	Large: £20. Small: £10.

Table 3: Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2021 - Summary Continued

Item	Information required	Allotment Sites					
		Brediland Allotments	Broadloan Gardens	Erskine Community Allotments	Grow in Glenburn	Sanctuary Garden	West End Allotments
I	How rents are decided	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM	Assoc. AGM
J	Waiting list numbers RC list: 29 Total: 120 (as at 07.10.21).	16	18	54	2	0	1
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 at end of 2021	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. (4 members class themselves as disabled)	N/A. (3 members identify themselves as disabled)	N/A. (2 disabled groups with a plot each)	N/A. (6 new raised beds constructed to replace existing decaying beds).	N/A. (currently 2 disabled members)	N/A
O	No. plots adjusted by RC to meet needs of disabled persons	Nil	Nil. One plot holder adapted his own plot.	Nil, but 1 plot with raised beds and another with partial raised beds and rest of ground with agreed "no dig" management to recognise plot holder's ill-health.	Nil	Nil but WEGGA installed a toilet suitable for disabled people.	Nil

Table 3: Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2021 - Summary Continued

Item	Information required	Allotment Sites					
		Brediland Allotments	Broadloan Gardens	Erskine Community Allotments	Grow in Glenburn	Sanctuary Garden	West End Allotments
P	No. people applying for adapted plot or for adjustment to existing	Nil	3	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	6 double raised bed plots retained for communal use, with produce shared with "Friends of Sanctuary Garden" – new category of members who do not hold plots.	N/A

APPENDIX 1 - Renfrewshire Council Grant Awards 2021

Allotment Associations and Growing Ground Associations

1 Community Empowerment Fund

No new applications in 2021 reached the stage at which they would have been submitted for approval by the Communities, Housing & Planning Policy Board. The Fund remained open through 2021 and should start to see renewed interest from community growing groups in 2022.

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

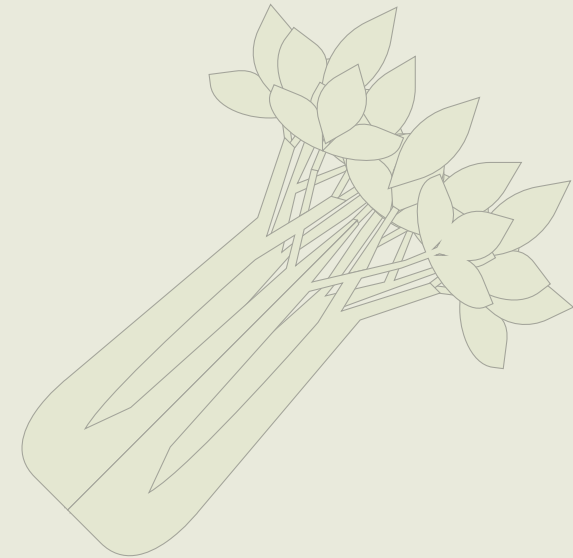
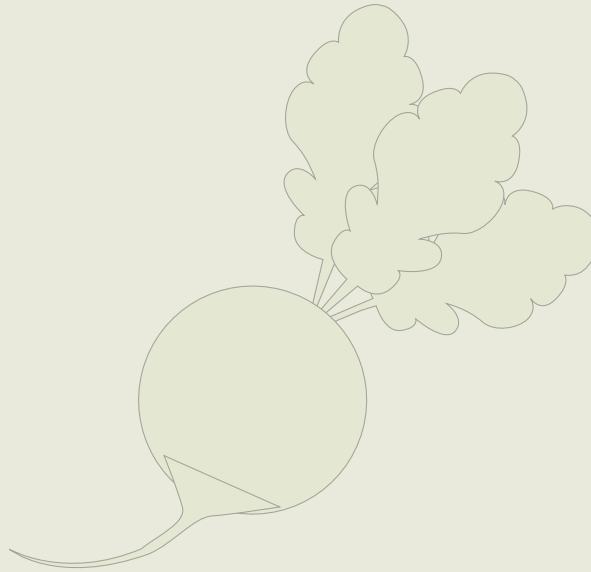
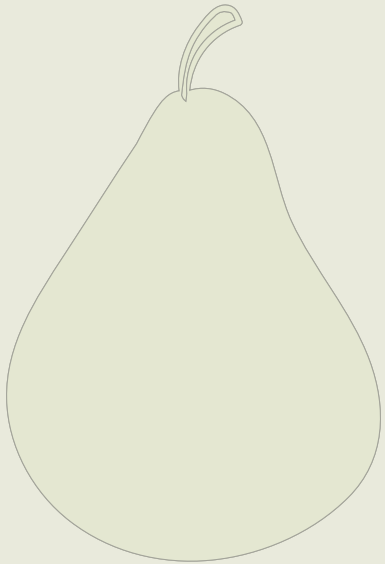
Continuing restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic meant that fewer community growing groups than usual were able to develop larger scale projects to the stage at which applications could be placed before the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board for approval.

Award	Receiving Organisation	Date	Purpose
£40,000	Friends of West Primary School	18th May 2021	Restoration of Maxwellton Park Sensory Garden (originally created in 2006)
£14,000	Rossland Circle Community Garden	18th May 2021	Purchase of area of neglected vacant ground in Bishopton to create a community garden.
£5,000	Kilbarchan Improvements Organisation	Delegated Authority noted on 18th May 2021	Improvements to the Old Library – Kilbarchan, Community Garden
£4,900	West End Growing Grounds Association (WEGGA)	Delegated Authority noted on 18th May 2021	Purchase and supply of bank of tools for use by gardeners in the Sanctuary Community Garden.
£10,000	Charleston Tenants and Residents Association	17th August 2021	Creation of a community garden in a bare, underused area of open space surrounded by high-rise flats.

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 in 2021 were as follows:

Award	Receiving Organisation	Date	Purpose
£2,000 by Gleniffer Local Partnership	30th Paisley & District St. Peter's Scout Group	1st June 2021	Part of £7,000 bid, of which £2,000 was to be allocated to garden project in the church grounds
£6,300 by Paisley East Local Partnership	Friends of Barshaw Park	16th June 2021	£8,300 requested for items including rainwater harvesting system and a composting toilet for use in the walled garden maintained by the Friends.
£2,050 awarded by Paisley North, West & Central Local Partnership	Renfrewshire Environmental Trust	15th June 2021	"Spuds for Buddies" Project.
£1,273.74 awarded by Paisley North, West & Central Local Partnership	Friends of Barshaw Park	15th June 2021	£2,000 requested for Growing Proud Community Connections For Wellbeing and Health project



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