

**To: Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board**

**On: 20 March 2024**

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**Report by: Chief Executive**

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**Heading: Renfrewshire Allotments Annual Report 2023**

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**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 2023. 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 2023
  - (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 local authorities 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 2022 was approved by the Board on 15 March 2022.
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#### 4. Renfrewshire Annual Allotment Report 2023

- 4.1. The report provides a summary of allotment provision in Renfrewshire over 2023, 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 seven Allotment/Growing Ground Associations who lease and occupy Council land as set out in the table below. The sites had a total of 381 individual growing plots and 124 people awaiting allocation of an allotment or growing plot as reported by the seven relevant growing groups in December 2023.

*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
Darkwood Crescent, Ferguslie Park, Paisley	Darkwood Crew

- 4.3 The number of those awaiting allotments has risen by 1 since the end of 2022 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. Officers continue to engage with local communities regarding localised imbalances between supply and demand where these have been identified.
- 4.4 Continuing progress has been made in addressing the Council's additional statutory duties under the Act during 2023. This has included supporting the development and delivery of new growing initiatives, identifying opportunities for new groups, encouraging existing groups to promote community food growing and seeking new occupiers for recently vacated growing sites.
- 4.5 In particular the report highlights good progress in respect of new growing provision and the support of new groups, with outcomes including:-

- A new 20 bed growing space at Ferguslie Park, Paisley supporting the ambitions of local organisation Darkwood Crew and delivering a key action from the 'Making of Ferguslie', a community led place plan for the neighbourhood. The new space was funded by the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme;
  - Approval of a Community Asset Transfer of the previously unused Linwood Community Garden to Linwood Community Council, supporting reuse of the site by local residents;
  - Supporting Erskine Community Allotments to progress a Community Asset Transfer of their existing allotment grounds and to consider the creation of an extension to the site, providing for additional provision;
  - Discussions with a number of community growing groups to consider the development of proposals for additional or new growing provision at Johnstone, Renfrew and Paisley, with the potential for further work based around community support.
- 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 2023 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 Plan for Net Zero, particularly through lower levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions because of reduced "food miles".

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## **Appendices**

1. Renfrewshire Annual Allotments Report 2023

## **List of Background Papers**

- (a) Communities, Housing and Planning Board 20 January 2020 - Renfrewshire Food Growing Strategy 2020-25
- (b) Infrastructure, Land and Environment Board 15 March 2022 – Allotments Annual Report 2022

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**Renfrewshire Council**  
**Allotments Annual Report 2023**





# Contents

- Introduction 3
- Provision of Allotments in Renfrewshire 4
- The Renfrewshire Food Growing Strategy 2020-25 5
- Annual Reporting Measures 6
- Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum – 2023 Activities 7
- Funding for Community Projects 8
- Summary of Key Issues 9
- APPENDIX 1 10
- APPENDIX 2 13

## 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 m<sup>2</sup> in size, but also allows the flexibility to provide varied plot sizes to reflect local demand.

Renfrewshire Council has seven 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
Darkwood Crescent, Ferguslie Park, Paisley	Darkwood Crew

Table 1: Allotment Site and Associations

The Chief Executive's Service are the main point of contact for all seven 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 381 individual allotments or allotment plots, and the Council is aware of an aggregate total of 124 people awaiting allocation of an allotment, or allotment plot. This is a very small increase from the previous annual report total of 123 and 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 would 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 2023 are summarised in Appendix 1 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 Growing Grounds Forum – 2023 Activities

The Council has continued to provide support and guidance to local groups and allotment associations through the Renfrewshire Growing Ground Forum. Two online meetings of the Forum were held in 2023 and enabled the sharing of information, provision of advice on statutory guidance and assistance to local growing organisations.

These efforts supported the following outcomes:-

- A new 20 bed growing space at Ferguslie Park, Paisley supporting the ambitions of local organisation Darkwood Crew and delivering a key action from the 'Making of Ferguslie', a community led place plan for the neighbourhood. The new space was funded by the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme;
- Approval of a Community Asset Transfer of the previously unused Linwood Community Garden to Linwood Community Council, supporting reuse of the site by local residents;
- Supporting Erskine Community Allotments to progress a Community Asset Transfer of their existing allotment grounds and to consider the creation of an extension to the site, providing for additional provision;
- Submission of a major funding bid to the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund to support the development of a Community Garden within Foxbar, Paisley supporting delivery of a key action identified in the community led local place plan for the neighbourhood;
- Preparation of a feasibility study for a new community growing space within Johnstone, supported by the Council's Climate Action Fund; and,
- Discussions with local groups to consider the development of proposals for new growing provision at Renfrew and Paisley, with the potential for further work based around community support.



## Funding for Community Projects







Although the Council does not manage allotment sites and allotment plots directly, it does offer sources of funding for independent groups to develop, build and run their own provision. These include:-

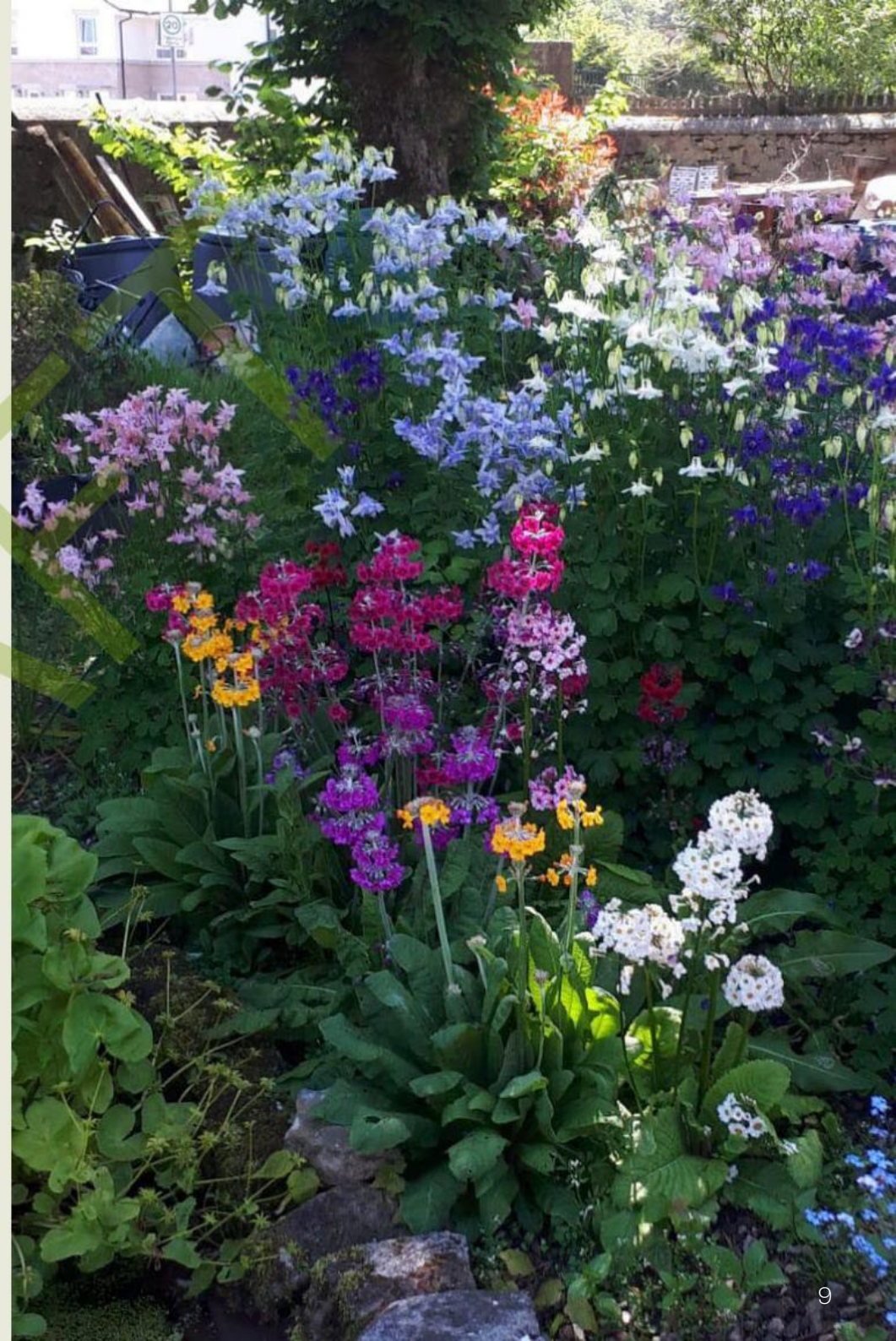
- A Sustainable Communities Fund which aims to support local people to develop projects that promote or improve community collaboration, health and wellbeing, local spaces, economic development, biodiversity and the environment.
- A Green Spaces, Parks and Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund to support communities to develop, improve and use their local green spaces - including allotments, growing grounds and community garden projects.
- Local Partnerships can also provide funding where the community representatives have identified green space improvements as a local priority.

Awards made during 2023 are summarised in Appendix 2.



# Summary of Key Issues in 2023

-  The total area of the seven allotment sites owned by the Council and leased to Allotment / Growing Ground Associations extends to 3.4 Ha, or thereby.
-  There are 371 allotment plots (including raised beds). In 2023 the number of plots increased by 20 compared to the previous year.
-  There were 124 people on the combined waiting list at the end of 2023, a marginal increase on 2022's figure of 123. No individual or group had been on the waiting list for five years or longer.
-  The Council is below the statutory 50% ratio between waiting lists and plot numbers across Renfrewshire, which would require the Council to consider 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 elected Allotment Association management committees.
-  Despite financial challenges faced by Local Government, funding support remains available to community groups and allotment associations to develop and improve growing grounds in Renfrewshire through various funds set up and administered by the Council (as outlined in Appendix 2).



## Appendix 1 - Table 3: Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2023 - Summary

Item	Information required	Allotment Sites						
		Brediland Allotments	Broadloan Gardens	Erskine Community Allotments	Grow in Glenburn	Sanctuary Garden	West End Allotments	Darkwood Crew, Ferguslie Park
A i	Site location	Cardell Drive, Paisley	Broadloan, Renfrew	Barwood Road, Erskine	Glen Park, Glenfield Rd, Paisley	Underwood Rd, Paisley	Douglas Street Paisley	Darkwood Crescent, Paisley
A ii	Site size	0.9 ha	0.4 ha	0.9 ha	0.4 ha	0.3 ha	0.4 ha	0.1 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	20
C	Percentage of the site not subleased	17% (doocots)	0%	0%	21% (habitat)	18% (car park)	6% (tyre store)	0%
D	No. of Plots let directly to growers(Nil)	N/A	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	N/A
F	Lease period to association	Annual	20 years	Not in place. Group applying for Community Asset Transfer	10 years	11 months, then Annual	Annual	To be confirmed by forthcoming lease
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	Tbc

Table 3: Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2023 - Summary Continued

Item	Information required	Allotment Sites						
		Brediland Allotments	Broadloan Gardens	Erskine Community Allotments	Grow in Glenburn	Sanctuary Garden	West End Allotments	Darkwood Crew, Ferguslie Park
H	Plot rents (£)	Large: £25 Med: £20 Small: £15	Large: £30 Small: £25 "Starter": £12.50 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	Tbc
I	How rents are decided	Assoc. AGM	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).	29	4	44	0	2	3	0
K	No. of people on waiting list for 5 or more years	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Tbc
L	Steps taken by Council to reduce waiting lists	Nil	Nil	Expansion area being discussed.	Nil	Nil	Nil	New site
M	Reasons for failure to comply with (I) above.	Limited opportunities to expand at site	Limited opportunities to expand at site	Design and statutory consents	Limited opportunities to expand at site	Limited opportunities to expand at site	Limited opportunities to expand at site	N/A

Table 3: Renfrewshire Council Allotments Annual Report 2023 - Summary Continued

Item	Information required	Allotment Sites						
		Brediland Allotments	Broadloan Gardens	Erskine Community Allotments	Grow in Glenburn	Sanctuary Garden	West End Allotments	Darkwood Crew, Ferguslie Park
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 in 2021 to replace existing decaying beds)	N/A. (Currently 2 disabled members)	N/A	Tbc
O	No. plots adjusted by RC to meet needs of disabled persons	No new initiatives	No new initiatives	No new initiatives	No new initiatives	Nil but WEGGA installed a toilet suitable for disabled people in 2021	No new initiatives	0
P	No. people applying for adapted plot or for adjustment to existing	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Tbc
Q	i) Income received: ii) Expenditure incurred (by the Council).	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£1 £Nil	£0 £44,000 construction cost
R	AOB prescribed by Scot Government	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



## APPENDIX 2 - Renfrewshire Council Grant Awards 2023

Renfrewshire Council made funding awards of £42,730 to community projects involving significant elements of community food growing during 2023, as summarised below.

### 1 Sustainable Communities Fund

During 2023 Renfrewshire Council decided that residual Community Empowerment Fund balances should be coalesced with the previous Community Climate Fund and UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund to create the Sustainable Communities Fund, which opened on 2 October 2023 with an anticipated closure date of November 2024. No awards had been confirmed by the end of 2023.

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

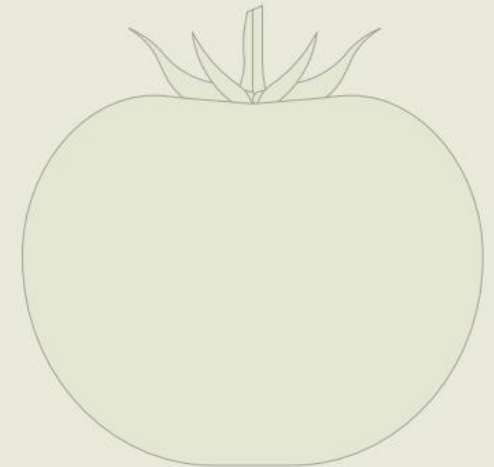
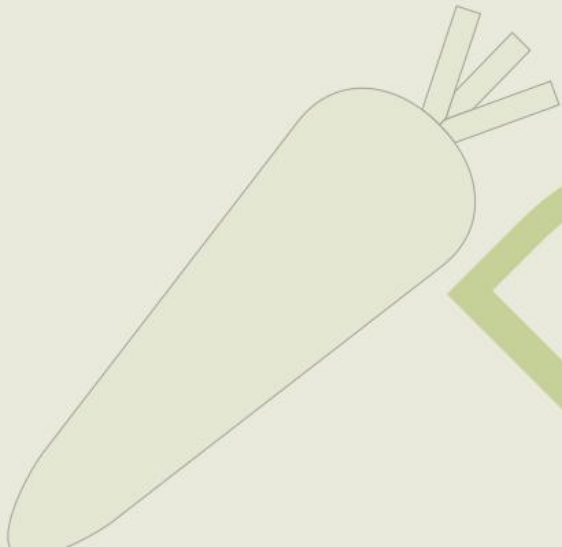
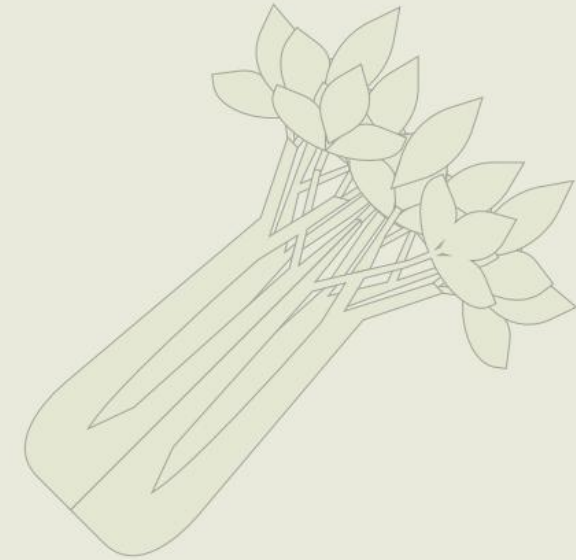
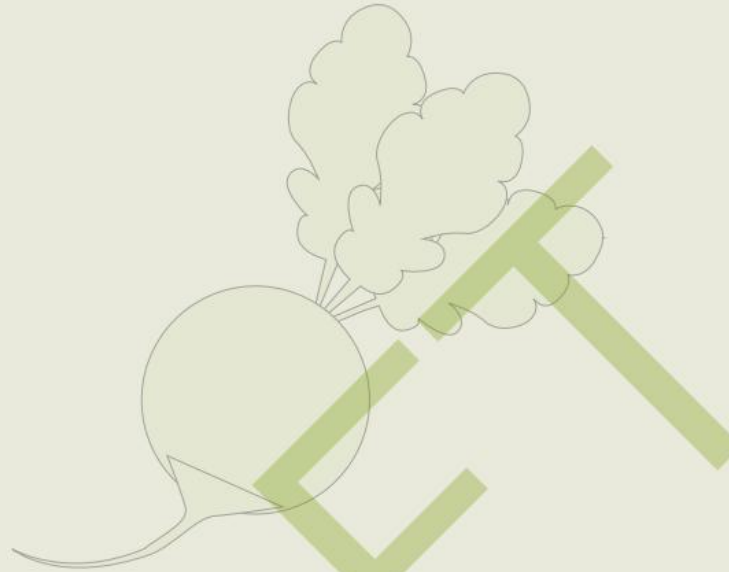
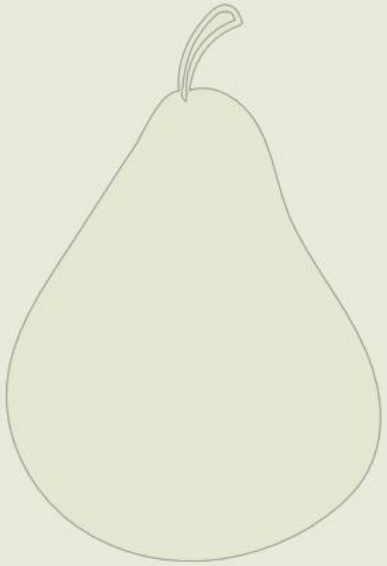
This fund continued to operate in 2023, although with reduced resources.

Award	Receiving Organisation	Date	Purpose
Under consideration	Lochfield Primary School	16th May 2023	Community Garden
Under consideration	Elderslie Community Council	16th May 2023	Community Garden and Allotment
£5,000	Linwood Community Council	16th May 2023	Tools and equipment for Linwood Community Garden
£1,700	Lochwinnoch Sustainable Community Garden	22nd August 2023	Upgrading works
£5,000	West End Growing Grounds Association (WEGGA)	31st October 2023	Maintenance works

### 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 2023 were as follows:

Award	Receiving Organisation	Date	Purpose
£4,950 from Johnstone & Linwood Local Partnership	Linwood Community Council	9th May 2023	Acquisition and restoration of Linwood Community Garden.
£10,000 from the Villages Local Partnership	Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust	25th May 2023	Lochhead Social Garden Project - Phase 1
£1,700 from the Villages Local Partnership	Lochwinnoch Sustainable Community Garden	25th May 2023	Lochwinnoch Sustainable Community Garden: purchase replacement poly tunnel material, remove the old cover and replace it with the new material.
£ 4,880.70 from Renfrew Local Partnership	Renfrew Victoria Youth Football Club	13th September 2023	Regeneration of Kirklandneuk Playing Fields in partnership with two local High Schools to create 1,000m2 garden with growing beds.
£4,500 from the Erskine, Inchinnan, Bishopton & Langbank Local Partnership	Inchinnan Community Nursery	11th May 2023	Outdoor space with growing areas



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