

Scottish Government offer money for allotments



The increasing appetite for 'grow your own' was served up a cash boost today by Environment Minister, Stewart Stevenson.

Mr Stevenson announced a £600,000 package of support to encourage the development of more community growing and support the growth of Scotland's grow your own sector.

£450,000 of the funding has been allocated to the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund and will be distributed to community growing projects over three years.

The remaining £177,500 has been allocated to organisations to support the growth of the community growing.

Some of the organisations which received funding are:

- Federation of City Farms and Gardens – £40,000 annually for three years. This will support core services, including the provision of training, advice and publications – benefitting over 120 community farms and gardens in Scotland, improving the knowledge and skills of 3,000 volunteers and more than 100,000 visitors
- Trellis – £35,500 to provide training, field visits, demonstrations sessions at care homes and health facilities, publication of guidance and advice with a focus on therapeutic gardening and the contribution that Grow Your Own makes to positive health outcomes
- Greenspace Scotland – £19,000 to create a map of a 'typical' Scottish settlement illustrating where different types of community growing can happen. They have already increased awareness and opportunities for community growing in urban Scotland

Mr. Stevenson also [launched a new website](#) this morning. Developed by the Federation of City Farms and Gardens, the site brings together all the organisations and grow your own resources that are available for people all over Scotland.

Speaking at a Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) community growing event at Battleby, near Perth this morning, Environment Minister, Stewart Stevenson, said:

“With the hunger for allotments currently outstripping availability in Scotland the Scottish Government is fully committed to supporting people that are interested in grow your own initiatives and projects. Our National Food and Drink Policy highlights the importance of grow your own initiatives and this funding will help communities all over Scotland increase access to healthy and sustainable food for all.”

Helen Pank from the Federation of City Farms and Gardens.

“We are absolutely delighted that the Scottish Government has awarded the FCFCG funding to continue our work. We support new and emerging community growing projects across Scotland, helping them become more effective, efficient and sustainable, and we make sure the benefits of community growing, to the environment, community cohesion, people’s health and the local economy, are better understood and publicised.

This grant from The Scottish Government will allow us to continue to provide an advice service, networking and training events, travel bursaries, site visits and promotional work, all of which will encourage and enable communities to start, and continue, growing projects”

One of the organisations mentioned on the new website is The City of Edinburgh Council who are landlords of most of the allotments in the city. During the last administration, the council spent money to establish some new allotment sites around the city, for example in Mackenzie Place, Stockbridge.

The Edinburgh Reporter spoke to LibDem Councillor, Robert Aldridge, a couple of months back, when he was then responsible for looking after the council's allotments. He said:-“One of our key objectives has been to expand provision. We have a long list of possible sites in the city. In the last year [three new sites with 64 new plots were opened](#). An extra £100,000 (on top of the existing spend of £60,000 per annum) was put into the budget to ensure that more new sites were opened and also to make the existing ones sustainable. For example, some allotments have been altered to use rainwater rather than mains water.

“We also looked at asking people to share plots to bring the length of the waiting list under control. The other thing was that the rules governing the running of allotments needed updating. The rules date from 1924 and needed refreshing. We are working with FEDAGA about that. It also needs Scottish Government approval.

“In the context of very tight financial constraints, our administration has spent money on allotments. We discussed this matter with many other agencies, including the NHS, partly about using their land. There are real health benefits, both mental and physical health, and have ensured that there is accessibility to all sites for disabled people too.

“We have been determined to ensure there are new sites on offer each year, but there are always more people on the waiting list. It is going to take some time to fulfil their desires.”