

Tarbert Community Gardens CGC Final Report March 2012



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1. **Project background**

Tarbert and surrounding villages have been working to provide more cohesive, resilient and sustainable communities. During the first 12 months of the two year tenure of the Big Green Tarbert it became apparent that there was a great deal of interest in growing food locally.

A Community Gardens Coordinator was appointed in mid June 2010 and was tasked with promoting the goals of growing your own and to support groups wishing to create communal gardens and allotments. Promoting these aims through the local media and at high impact events such as Tarbert Seafood festival and Clachan Smallholders Gathering were key to the potential for success.

Tarbert Healing Garden, based in the grounds of the village Medical Centre is key to local food production and this resource was to be developed to include training courses, school pupil participation and volunteer events.

2. **Project Aims and Objectives**

The aims of this project are to train growers, develop areas already set over to vegetable production, promote local food and to encourage volunteering within local communities.

1. Increase awareness of the benefits of local food
2. Promote healthy eating and local food production
3. Provide training courses on vegetable and fruit growing
4. Support local communal gardens
5. Research the feasibility of providing allotments and extending growing areas in Clachan and Ronachan
6. Build relationships with like minded organisations/individuals
7. Work with Tarbert Academy and Tarbert Youth group to promote "grow your own" activities
8. Initiate and promote the use of containers for those with limited garden space
9. Promote garden sharing schemes
10. Develop the training facilities at Tarbert Healing Garden
11. Increase awareness of volunteering opportunities in and around the Community Gardens
12. Provide a community orchard

3. **Methodology used**

The main methods used in projects such as this require the development of resources and increased communications between individuals and organisations. To this end the Healing garden infrastructure was extended to create more raised beds, a potting shed and a large greenhouse. The aim for this was to create a highly visible resource with central location within the village that was accessible to all. All courses were run from this location and vegetable plants were grown for sharing within the

community. The Community Gardens Coordinator was also highly visible within the village. This allowed for people to make contact at almost any given time.

An association of individuals from the major volunteer and business groups was formed to create Tarbert Community Gardens as an entity, with the aim of promoting local food growing and better communications. A management plan for each section of the community gardens was produced and distributed.

The local press were used extensively during the period covered by this project. Each new course or noteworthy event was highlighted in the local press through the use of editorials and advertisements.

4. Project outputs (activities)

Through the organising of events and courses during the 9 months of the project activity we achieved the following outputs (related to section 2)

1. In order to increase awareness of our Community Gardens and local food production we have issued;

- i. 5 press releases, 2 newsletters, 8 advertisements, 10 items for local notice boards, 8 permanent signs, 100 leaflets
- ii. Engaged with local people during 2 large events
- iii. Hosting an open day to promote facilities and community garden as a whole

2. Promoted healthy eating and local food production by

- i. Engaging with local businesses and encouraged them to become active in the Community Garden
- ii. Advising and encourage new local producers
- iii. Established training courses
- iv. Highlighting the issues surrounding transported foods

3. Designed and delivered the following courses

- i. a 6 session gardening course delivered to 9 individuals
- ii. 13, one day courses
- iii. Arranged for the delivery of a herbal group meeting monthly at the health centre

4. Created the Community Garden Steering group, the inaugural meeting for this will be in the spring of 2011

- i. To allow for the creation of allotments within the project area we
- ii. Carried out surveys in relation to allotment placement
- iii. Arranged meetings between owners of land within Clachan Riggs
- iv. Worked with the residents of Ronachan house in the setting up of allotment gardens

5. **Engaged with the local Health Authority and other like minded groups**
6. **Engage practically with groups of all ages and abilities by**
 - i. Participating with the After school gardening club
 - ii. Advising on and Setting up the Youth Garden
 - iii. Working with various individuals with physical and age related disabilities
7. **Established drying green garden within the communal ground of a local tenement block and promoted the use of communal compost bins in tenement housing drying greens**
8. **Consulted the community on the possibilities of garden share schemes. We were successful in setting one garden share partnership up. This failed after a short period due to misunderstandings between the partners on access rights. From this it became clear that we need to be more prescriptive when setting garden shares up.**
9. **Established the training facilities at the Healing garden**
10. **In order to facilitate increased numbers of volunteers we**
 - i. Developed and coordinated volunteer activities
 - ii. Appointed a volunteer leader
11. **Developed the concept of Community Orchards to form an innovative mix of private gardens, public spaces, school grounds, youth group garden and an organic smallholding.**

5. **Project outcomes**

The outcomes of this project can be measured in the activities of those who participated in the events listed above and to what extent they have taken the message of this project into their lifestyles. This can only be guessed at during a project of this limited timescale and a major factor that should be considered is the seasonality of the project. Given that we have virtually had 1 growing season in which to demonstrate the ease with which gardening can be used to lessen dependence on shipped goods.

6. The major outcomes of this project can be listed as;
7. Local people are more aware of where their food comes from and the impact food has on climate
8. A number of local people in the community now have the skills needed to grow their own food
9. A number of local people are now keen to have their own allotment
10. Local young people have been inspired to grow their own food and now have the facilities to do so
11. More local people have become community garden volunteers
12. Tarbert has a community orchard that has inspired local people to grow fruit

During the project a number of leaflets and promotional materials were produced. These can be viewed by clicking [here](#)

6. Co₂ Reductions

The Carbon savings estimated for this project can be seen in the table below. The target for the life of the project was a total reduction of 520 kgCO₂/yr

Activity	No.	Waste Reduction		Source of Calculations/Notes
			(kgCO ₂ /yr)	
Productive Garden (individua)	15	18		Garnett, T. (2007) Meat and Dairy Production & Consumption; Food Climate Research Network; based on Table 4
less productive garden (individua)	7	9		Garnett, T. (2007) Meat and Dairy Production & Consumption; Food Climate Research Network; based on Table 4
Ronachan house Allotments	2	140		Ronachan house closed in November. Allotments will therefore not continue
Youth Garden (m2)	0	12		Food - It's our future Scottish government
Back Green Garden (M2)	10	6		Application for grant
Healing Garden (m2)	10	120		Food - It's our future Scottish government
Clachan Allotments	0	0		Failed to get local consensus for allotments
Information campaign (individuals)	30	33.749865		Food - It's our future Scottish government
School Gardening club (low productivity)	5	3		Food - It's our future Scottish government
Demonstrations and courses (individuals)	37	41.6248335		Food - It's our future Scottish government
Egg production (individuals)	6	300		Garnett, T. (2007) Meat and Dairy Production & Consumption; Food Climate Research Network; based on Table 4
Fruit production yr 1-5(av/kg/pa)	5	136.25		International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO Airfreight Transport of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables : A Review of the Environmental Impact and Policy Options. Geneva: ITC, 2007. vi, 50 p.
Total reduction		819.624		Doc. No. MDS-07-136.E
Fruit production yr 10+ (av/kg/)	10	272.5		Legacy
Fruit production yr 6-10(av/kg/)	15	408.75		Legacy

7. Other social, economic and environmental impacts

1 Social Impact

By acting as a conduit for many of the smaller garden volunteer groups and businesses and bringing them together under the banner of Community Gardens we succeeded in creating a single entity, whilst preserving the individuality of each of the smaller groups. This entity will allow for a greater degree of stability and access to volunteer resources that were perhaps less available prior to this project.

Continuous engagement by the coordinator with these diverse groups and with members of the general public have raised awareness of the community benefits of local and individual food production.

2 Economic Impact of the Project

Due to the seasonality of the project we feel that the major economic impact of the project will not be visible until at least another growing season. This allows for those who have participated in the various courses to put their new knowledge and enthusiasm into action. The Community Gardens Coordinator is confident that the impact will be significant and will have a knock on effect as those adults and children encourage others in their peer group to grow and use locally grown vegetables and fruit.

Through our activities we have attained the following funding

Funder	Grant received
CCF	£26500.00
Postcode Lottery Trust	£3488.00
Big Lottery Fund	£2323.50
Mid Argyll Public Health Network	£350.00
ACHA	£298.00
Fyne Homes	£100.00

3 Environmental Impact

By encouraging local people to grow and use local food we hope to significantly lessen the environmental impact of the use of transported goods. This will be seen over time as more individuals grown their own food. Through the promotion of composting comments have been made to the Coordinator that the amount of waste going into waste bins has decreased dramatically over the period of this project and that of the larger BGT project. This will therefore provide a benefit to the soil structure and lessen the dependence of growers on chemical fertilisers in addition to providing more pest resilient crops. Many local producers were able to sell or trade their excess crops with the Larder a local vegetable and florist shop and with the Cafébarge restaurant and at the local produce market held in Tarbert, thus promoting local trading and local food

8. Legacy of the project

Many of the legacies of this project are physical and these include the development of the teaching resources at the Healing Garden, Tarbert Youth Group Garden, the Community Orchard and increased number of books and equipment freely available to Community Garden resource users. Other legacies are not specifically physical but are to do with building the longterm viability of the above projects.

The Healing Garden now has an outdoor classroom, potting shed, greenhouse, raised beds all of which are available for use by individuals or groups. The maintenance of the community garden has benefited due to an increase in volunteers thanks to the coordinator holding regular volunteer events, creating an injection of enthusiasm. The increased visibility of the Community Gardens has been reliant on school visits, courses, volunteer days and the high profile public launch of the community gardens as an organisation.

Increased awareness of individuals to the benefits, both financial and health, of growing your own food or buying locally is a significant part of the legacy of this project and has been supplemented by the gardening course, many of which were very well attended.

The community orchard will provide for significant crops of fruit over the next 30 years and as the trees mature their impact of the local economy will develop. Proposals have been made to create a Community Orchard event each year at harvest time where fruit can be swapped or sold.

Engagement with Schoolchildren and elderly residents has provided great hope for the future of growing local food. This has been due largely to the enthusiasm of the local school teachers and focus groups.

As a direct result of this project we have seen the genesis of a new one entitled "Foodshare" and using the highly successful Stroudco model. Setting up this legacy project has involved developing the interagency/partnership working used during the current project.

Relationships have been developed between individuals, charities, health professionals and public bodies such as Mid Argyll Public Health Network, Choose Life, National Farmers Union, InspirAlba, Campbeltown Community Garden, Argyll Organics, Tarbert Producers Market, The Co-Operative Society, Islay Organic Garden, Argyll College and Skåne LEADER LAG in Sweden and Argyll Agricultural Forum. These participants have shown a willingness to work together and it provides a partnership that will produce.

Tarbert and Skipness Community Trust are fully supportive of this legacy project and will take it forward using the skills and experience of the Trust Chair who has helped with the application and who has run a similar scheme previously.