

We have been hard at work in this, our 30th year, supporting record numbers of community-led farms and gardens in the UK. Membership has risen beyond 550 organisations, but we know there are many hundreds more who benefit from our advice services and our advocacy on their behalf with policy makers and funders. This work is particularly crucial in the current economic climate, with many community farms and gardens seeking help to find fresh sources of funding and revenue. Our own fundraising efforts have been rewarded with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out an oral history project, recording the experiences of those stalwarts who have shaped the movement since its early days. Some funds will be used to develop an oral history toolkit for local groups. In September and October, a series of events across the UK will mark our 30th anniversary and also feature oral history seminars. Looking to the past reminds us how the work of FCFCG and the movement we support has increasingly been recognised as essential by all main political parties, funders and stakeholders. Looking to the future, we are hopeful this recognition will continue for the next 30 years.

European Federation visits UK
The European Federation of City Farms, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, held its annual event took place at our main office, in Bristol in March. The Federation of City Farms, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, held its annual event took place at our main office, in Bristol in March. The Federation of City Farms, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, held its annual event took place at our main office, in Bristol in March.

Membership record achieved
Over the last three decades we have supported and advocated on behalf of thousands of community farms and gardens. This year we reached the milestone of 500 concurrent members and to mark the achievement, we donated a fruit tree to 500th member Transition Bro Ddŷfi (ffrŷyth I Baw!). The group is aiming to engage the local community in the planting of fruit trees in schools and on housing estates in Machynlleth.

Community Land Bank
We are continuing our work on researching a Community Land Bank, which would act as an independent, not-for-profit agency, supporting access to unused land for either temporary or long term gardening use. FCFCG is now engaged in exploratory discussions about pilot schemes in several local authority areas including Bristol, Brighton & Hove and Nottingham. There are also plans to include a rural dimension to the research and to consult on the idea in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Appeal grants success
We have distributed funds raised by the Blue Peter Mission Nutrition local groups who want to grow food sustainably, is now well under way with four new development workers based in Coventry, London, Manchester and Plymouth. We have run a total of 18 regional training and networking events to support local food groups so far, in addition to giving direct support and advice. Further information aimed at groups wanting to establish food projects is now also available from a special Local Food section of our website. Meanwhile, we have expanded our field worker programme in England, enabling us to provide more direct help for groups from experts with experience of working at grass roots level. New initiatives are springing up across England with our support – a large project in Cornwall will increase food growing for residents in deprived neighbourhoods and our Midlands team have been providing business planning support for an eco project funded by local businesses. In the

England
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Wales
The Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Rural Affairs launched our dual language map of community farms and gardens in June, at the Senedd in Cardiff. The event was a huge success and attracted much useful publicity. We have been representing our members on a National Assembly for Wales task group, which has produced a Community Grown Food Action Plan outlining the benefits of

Scotland
An updated version of our Scotland map has been published and support for a growing number of Scottish members is ongoing. Partnerships have become a particular focus this year. We are working with the Scottish Government's Food Policy Unit on plans to make it easier for public/private landlords to make their land available for community cultivation. We liaised with the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society on an event for public sector decision makers to show that community cultivation can help tackle disadvantage, improve well-being and regenerate communities.

Northern Ireland
FCFCG and the Allotments Regeneration Initiative (ARI) now have a voluntary convenor to help further our work in Northern Ireland. In September and October, a series of events across the UK will mark our 30th anniversary and also feature oral history seminars. Looking to the past reminds us how the work of FCFCG and the movement we support has increasingly been recognised as essential by all main political parties, funders and stakeholders. Looking to the future, we are hopeful this recognition will continue for the next 30 years.

News & updates

30 years and still growing

A number of events will take place across the UK later this year to mark our 30th anniversary. If you want to attend an event, please contact FCFCG direct or visit our website for more details.

- 30th anniversary conference and AGM, 3-4 September**
Held in Nottingham, this event will include a conference session, workshops and site visits, as well as a civic reception and a celebration ceilidh. A special garden plot using the shape of the FCFCG logo has been created in the grounds of Nottingham Castle for visitors to view.
- Welsh gathering, 10-11 September**
This event, at the RENEW Walled Garden Project in Wales, will be both a celebration itself and contain training and workshops on 'holding celebrations' for member groups.
- Inaugural ARI allotments officers' forum for Scotland, 15 September**
An event for council staff responsible for the management of allotments in Scotland. An opportunity for sharing and hearing about good practices and building a supportive network.
- National care farming conference, 16 September**
Care farming is the therapeutic use of farming practices. FCFCG is one



- City harvest festival, 18 September**
Held in the attractive ground of Capel Manor in Enfield, the festival is in its 12th year. It provides a showcase for community-run farms and gardens in the London area.
- Northern Ireland event, 24 September**
An event will be held at Limavady in Northern Ireland to explore community land and growing.
- Scotland national networking event, 8 October**
Bringing together Federation members, policy-makers and representatives of organisations related to community gardening and farming in Scotland, this annual event (organised in association with Trellis and ARI) will be held at the Scottish Natural Heritage Offices at Battleby, near Perth.

Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens

Supporting communities to manage their local green spaces

Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales

www.farmgarden.org.uk

Summer 2010
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30 years and still growing

Partnerships & initiatives

Education partnerships
School Farms Network:

There are now 82 school farms in the UK and a large number working towards keeping livestock. SFN is encouraging this upward trend through its information, networking and support services, which this year include a number of Continuing Professional Development courses aimed at teachers and other school farm practitioners. Subjects range from keeping animals at a primary school farm to using the school farm to raise attainment at GCSE level.

Allotments Regeneration Initiative

Allotments Officers' Forums are now active in England and plans for a new forum in Scotland are underway. ARI's network of mentors are busy giving advice and support to anyone wishing to create a brand new allotment site or regenerate an existing one. At a strategic level the project has been involved with the writing of *A Place to Grow* with the Local Government Association and has taken part in the Welsh Assembly's inquiry into allotments provision.

National Care Farming Initiative

In April, care farmers visited Highgrove House for an event hosted by HRH The Prince of Wales, who is an enthusiastic supporter of care farming and NCFI. A delegation from Norway toured a number of care farms, including city farms, in May. And in September a national conference is planned, including training sessions and seminars aimed at contributing to the future set-up of NCFI.

Growing with Schools:

This Coventry-based project aims to give expert, hands-on support to help start growing activities in schools. It has helped nearly 50 schools so far and a Growing With Schools celebration event was held in June. The project has also produced a number of information sheets on a variety of subjects for school-based growers, which are available from the FCFCG website.



Across the UK

FCFCG would like to thank our funders, which include:

Support our Federation – Donate Today!
Your donation will help our work creating opportunities in communities across the UK. Visit www.farmgarden.org.uk/donate to make a donation online or fill in this form and send with a cheque (payable to FCFCG) to our main office.

Remember: If you pay income tax, we can claim back 28 percent tax on your donation.

I want to (tick as appropriate):

Allow FCFCG to reclaim tax on my donation

Talk to FCFCG about regular donations or leaving a legacy

Date _____

Signature _____

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

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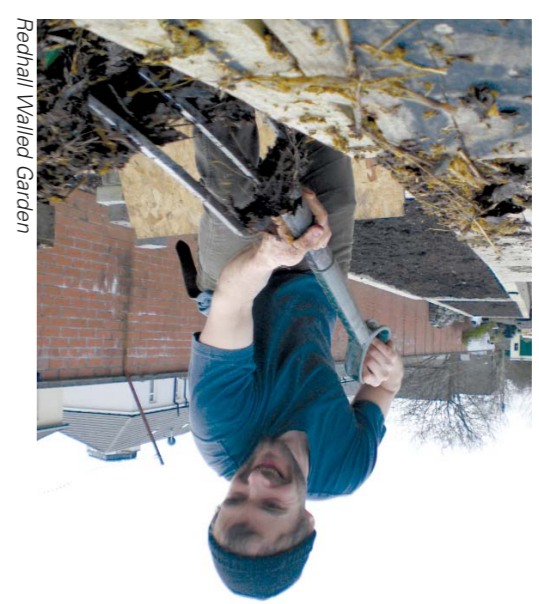
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Social Enterprise

The uncertain economic and political climate has created pressure on community farms and gardens to find new and alternative sources of revenue. As a result, many projects are looking to social enterprise as a way of generating income. There are plenty of inspiring and innovative schemes already underway, as these case studies demonstrate.



Gorgie City Farm



GORGIE CITY FARM EDINBURGH

A child-friendly working farm on a one hectare site in Edinburgh, Gorgie City Farm was officially opened in 1982 on land previously occupied by the city's refuse department. As funding resources have diminished, the farm has increasingly looked to social enterprise to help them remain solvent, and as a way of increasing the benefits to the farm's users.



The farm's own animals play a part in Gorgie's mobile pet service, which makes £3,000 a year. The service takes small animals into residential homes, schools and hospitals for £60 a visit. In addition they attend local fetes and agricultural shows on summertime weekends. The service has doubled recently to an average of two visits a week due to heavy demand.

David feels that the service could be expanded, but this depends on finding a good pool of reliable volunteers. "Our volunteers tend to be students, people out of work, people trying to improve their CV, people between jobs or retired people. The main difficulty with using volunteers is that they may move on without much notice or lose interest."

One of Gorgie's most valuable services is a produce stall selling goods grown in the farm's gardens and polytunnel, alongside items such as bird boxes, manure, straw, hay, sawdust and firewood. They have also teamed up with a local community food co-op in Edinburgh to widen the range of items on offer.

Annual income from the stall, staffed entirely by volunteers, is just £2,500, but income is not the only measure of success - the stall has real educational value, as David explains: "It helps provide information about recipes and healthy eating to visitors, and gives our volunteers genuine work experience - some have moved onto retail jobs."

There are also expansion plans in the pipeline, according to David: "We are currently applying for a grant from the Scottish Government to build a proper shop and working with the local business Gateway agency to draw up a full business plan."



Swansea Community Farm



Established in 1992, Swansea Community Farm is based on a 1.4 hectare site in an area of high deprivation. It encourages local people to take an active role in their community by learning about the environment, animal care and organic gardening. Raising enough money to fulfil these aims has grown increasingly difficult. As a result, the farm has started several social enterprises to help secure its future.

One of the most innovative pilot projects is the Rent-A-Hen scheme. The farm provides renters with a chicken coop, a chicken run, two laying hens, food and plenty of advice. The renter signs up for two to six months after which they either give everything back or buy it.

The pilot project is small scale, with just two coops currently being used. In order to generate a decent amount of income, the scheme will need to grow substantially, as Kari Lucas, the farm's Community Development Manager recognises: "To make this profitable, we will need to invest in more coops and it would be worth thinking about training up volunteers, so that we have a team of Rent-A-Hen experts."

But Kari believes the scheme has all the ingredients to be a success: "If you are someone who wants fresh laid eggs in the morning, you can decide whether it is really for you or not. We can make that next big step accessible and teach people how to be responsible hen owners."

The farm has also launched larger scale projects, including opening up a café/shop for the first time in April 2010. It is the culmination of 18 months work that began as a volunteer-led project providing food at lunchtimes for staff and regular volunteers. It now runs with one staff member, (employed through a government funding scheme for long-term

unemployed young people), working alongside five adult volunteers and up to 12 local young people.

Kari recalls having a 'eureka' moment while sitting in another city farm café: "We decided to transform what had been a boring board room with a tiny kitchen into a café space. Simply by rearranging the tables and covering them with tablecloths and flowers, perceptions immediately changed and the regular volunteers wanted to cook and serve food."

There was no funding to kick-start the café. Volunteers built a serving point and worktop out of local oak; children painted a mural on the front and sofas were donated. The kitchen is small and has only one hand-washing facility, so only simple food can be prepared.

Kari hopes the employment funding will provide a staff member for a year. Profits will determine what happens beyond that. However, in the first two months the café/shop has made a modest profit of £500.

Children's parties are the third strand in the farm's social enterprise strategy. With four parties in the first two months, they are also proving a success, both in generating income and attracting people who wouldn't usually come to the farm.

The farm charges from £80 for a basic party up to £220 for a party with 'bolt-ons', such as a hands-on animal tour, activity packs and food including fresh salad from the allotment.

Said Kari: "The families said they would actually be prepared to pay more for a party. And, in the two months that the parties were held donations on the farm were up an extra £120 per month."

Hulme Community Garden Centre



This unique community led inner-city horticultural project has a mission to bring local people together through gardening. Based in a deprived area of Manchester, Hulme Community Garden Centre (HCGC) is primarily a volunteer and education hub promoting horticultural and sustainability issues to schools, colleges, the local community and wider public.



HCGC's shop is a great example of a successful social enterprise. Open since 2000, the shop's income increased dramatically after a Big Lottery funding injection of £85,000 enabled it to expand and take on more staff. As a result shop income has risen from £19,000 in 2007/8, to around £170,000 for 2009/10.

Three full-time posts were created with the help of the Big Lottery grant (a volunteer co-ordinator, nursery co-ordinator and project manager), which means the shop can expand opening times from one day a week to seven days. In addition, HCGC has been able to invest in more polytunnels and growing space, enabling it to double the size of the stock and lower costs. Volunteers are used to help grow produce and with general work in the shop.

Aside from the staffing investment, the project has worked really hard at becoming more business savvy, according to HCGC Project Manager Jamie Dickinson.

"We have analysed what people want, by seeing what sells well, and we have invested in more



stock. This gives us a better and wider range for our diverse customer base. We appeal to both local people and the organic/environmental customers who come from further afield.

"We also emphasise good customer service. Because we are known as very accessible and very friendly, people keep coming back. We always make sure that everyone who walks through the door has a really good experience. They then go away and tell other people about us."

The garden centre also realised that other activities, combined with better publicity, can raise interest that brings more potential customers through the doors. For example, the project runs free one-day events aimed at families with children. In 2010 the biggest of these, Potato Day, brought in around 1,000 people. On that day £2,000 was generated in shop sales, which is the largest taking by the shop in a single day.

Another big money spinner for HCGC is garden design. Work started on this in 2006 and by 2008/09, income had reached £7,000 per year. Projected income for the following year is £20,000. As with the shop, the project has been boosted by the extra staffing resources created by the Big Lottery Fund grant.

The work evolved out of small training and design projects for local community groups, then grew as HCGC became more proactive in going out and raising their profile in the local community. With a growing reputation has come bigger pieces of work - now they are being approached by landscape architects and, in particular, housing associations.

When helping regenerate areas of land on housing association developments, HCGC carries out high levels of local consultation, giving residents the opportunity to get involved with the design and choose the plants. It is often a small core of retired residents who have the time and interest to become involved in these projects. This can lead to other people and other age groups feeling excluded. The solution is working hard to include everyone. This is typical of social enterprise, where ensuring community benefit is as important as getting the job done.

There are practical benefits too, as Jamie explained: "Giving all residents more ownership of the space reduces vandalism and also saves money. If you are working really closely with the community then when you plant a tree, the kids will not turn round and knock it down."

HCGC is also working with a local college to build a market garden. Food grown will be sold back to the college canteen. Said Jamie: "This work helps with our social enterprise and has lots of links with the curriculum. Meanwhile students are getting better exercise and access to healthy lifestyles."