

## Manifesto Asks

**Social Farms & Gardens would like to see the next Senedd empower communities across Wales to farm, garden and grow together. By working in partnership with the third sector, Wales can build a stronger, more resilient food system alongside health and wellbeing advancements. Connections across boundaries and bringing communities together will be the roots that help this positive change flourish.**

1. **Quick Win - Communities endorsed to use public land** – Every local authority in Wales should have clear and proportionate processes for taking on underused public land for nature-based activities. For example, [Parks should be diverse spaces with wildflower meadows and a variety of growing areas](#). Also note the [Right to Grow movement](#) which is gaining momentum with local authorities in England.
2. **Quick win - Spaces to grow in schools** – Every school in Wales should have space to learn in the outdoors; all pupils in Wales should know how to grow food and learn (hands on) why nature is so important. This should be a requirement on all new school sites. A good example is [Llantwit Major School](#) in the Vale of Glamorgan.
3. **Quick win - Spaces for growing food on new development sites** – New communities can be easily offered the opportunity to come together and grow. Wales needs its large housebuilders and social housing providers to provide spaces for community growing on new housing sites. Costs would be low, the benefits large. Third sector support to help manage and run sites would come hand in hand. See point 6. Please see Sustain report on the benefits [here](#).
4. **Horticulture specific support** - Horticulture is now being seen as a key area of development to build resilience across the UK (please see Just in Case Report [here](#)). We have begun to make great strides in Wales, but there is an urgent need to expand the horticulture production base further. Domestic horticultural production across the UK (to meet the demand of a healthy diet) would add £2.3 billion to the UK economy, create 23,520 jobs and boost farm profits by three per cent<sup>1</sup>. We need to see incentives, support and training for livestock farmers and new entrants to move into economically viable models of horticulture. Crucially, these farms must be run by skilled professionals.
5. **Public bodies working in partnership and thinking long term** - There is a need for a stronger emphasis on the five ways of working ([Wellbeing of Future Generations Act](#)) so that public bodies think more long term and collaborate with third sector specialists much more often and effectively.
6. **Funding the third sector long term** - Community growers and smaller-scale horticultural farmers across Wales should be afforded long term support via a third sector programme, providing security to run their operations - supporting them to manage volunteers, encourage social cohesion and practice sustainable food

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<sup>1</sup> <https://green-alliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/The-strong-economic-case-for-expanding-UK-horticulture.pdf>

production. Please see report on the crisis being experienced by volunteer projects in Wales [here](#).

7. **Long term funding for the [Community Land Advisory Service Cymru](#)** - Communities who want to manage land for nature based activities including food growing, are reliant on free access to the best advice and support. A [recent evaluation](#) of the Service found it to be excellent value for money.
8. **A whole system approach to food** - Supply chains (procurement) for meals in schools, care homes and hospitals needs to be radically redesigned in favour of local producers. Please see the Food Policy Alliance Cymru response report [here](#).
9. **A fair planning system for small scale horticultural farmers** - [Permitted Development Rights](#) for new structures on farms needs urgently expanded to those farming on less than 5 hectares (12.4 acres) so they can start or expand their farming operations. Such structures are crucial buildings for the viability of sustainable farming operations. Furthermore, [Rural Enterprise Dwelling planning policy guidance](#) needs urgent review to align with the need for many more small-scale horticultural farms. Please see Powys new planning Guidance [here](#) and Ministerial Planning Statement [here](#).
10. **Responsible management of the public estate** - The primary purpose of the County farm estate across Wales should be to support regenerative agriculture, climate, nature and food security in Wales. Public bodies (with Welsh Government leading by example) need to be emboldened to work in partnership to manage their public estates more responsibly, clearly utilising their assets (and supporting communities to support them) to meet the goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Short-term financial value alone, is no longer appropriate.
11. **Long term leases for regenerative farmers** - Public bodies need to afford long term leases (15 yrs plus) to attract investment into regenerative farming. Please see Viability Toolkit of small scale horticultural farms in Wales [here](#)
12. **Community rights to land** - We call for communities to have the right to buy or manage land, especially public land, so that vital spaces are kept at the heart of community life. A community right of refusal would put Wales on an equal footing with England and Scotland where communities have greater legal rights to land. Please see Future Generations Commissioners call for a Community Right to Buy [here](#).
13. **Safeguarded land for farming** - High grade agricultural land must be protected for sustainable agriculture without exception. The growth of towns and cities needs to be set against the need for land to enable Wales to feed itself and become much more resilient to changes. Local Development Plans across Wales must provide policies with this focus and safeguard land for food growing in and around towns and cities. Please see Evidence Pack report on how Wales can feed itself in 2035 [here](#).
14. **Supported [Social return on investment models](#)** - Welsh Government should champion model/s, so that the real value of community activities in nature can be realised and further funding provided accordingly.
15. **Backing for community kitchens and gardens** – These need to be incentivised across towns and cities as hubs that bring communities together to grow cook and eat. A good example is [Cegin Hedyn](#) in Carmarthen.



## **Who we are**

[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)

Social Farms & Gardens empowers communities to reach their full potential—boosting resilience, health and local food systems through hands-on nature-based activities.

We're proud to support the UK's largest network of community farms and growing spaces.

Through our 45 years of experience across the UK, we know that community food initiatives boost economic prosperity and bring communities together, have huge health benefits, reduce poverty and increase the availability and consumption of locally sourced food.

In Wales, through funding from The Welsh Government and The National Lottery, we are the leading supporters and advocates of community led gardeners and farmers.

We work in partnership with public bodies, third sector organisations, and government at all levels. Our work directly supports the Wales Community Food Strategy, and through our representation on the Wales Food Industry Board, we are working to increase the production and consumption of Welsh food in Wales, value public spaces and help the voice of communities be heard.

Our work strongly aligns with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. By supporting agroecological practices and community-led growing, we help deliver joined-up and long-term solutions across health, climate, and food policy.