

Resilient Green Spaces – reclaiming community-owned farm for community growing

June 2023

Resilient Green Spaces is a £1.27m partnership project to pilot alternative re-localised food systems and community-led green spaces in Wales running up until June 2023. As part of this, Social Farms and Gardens (SF&G) supported the development of new allotment sites across Wales. A particular focus was on making more private and public sector land available for communities to grow their own fresh food.

These five case studies highlight the different types of land secured with the help of Resilient Green Spaces, as well as sharing tips to inspire those who may be on a similar path. **Tregarth Community Allotments CIC's** journey was to secure community-owned farmland to grow food for the local community.

Introduction

Tregarth Community Allotments CIC have over 64 plots stretched over 2 fields which makes them one of the biggest allotment sites in North Wales! Based in Gwynedd, the allotment site was established 7 years ago when the community-owned farm they are based upon was put up for sale. Growers come from near and far to enjoy growing fresh vegetables with beautiful sea views. The site has an additional 8 microplots containing raised beds, ensuring the site is accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

Over the years, the CIC continuously improved the site. They expanded the car park, moved and reskinned the polytunnel and have put up fences for individual plots to prevent damage from rabbits. They bought a strimmer and lawnmower for communal use and regularly bring in woodchip. They also had a shed built to keep the communal Strimmer and tools safe.

Tregarth share the wider site – Ffarm Moelyci – with 10 other organisations which includes a café, farm shop, the Community Barn and kitchen which is hired out to the wider community and Snowdonia Donkeys.

What support did they receive from Resilient Green Spaces?

At the beginning of their journey, SF&G helped Tregarth Community Association to establish their Community Interest Company. Later, with the support from Resilient Green Spaces, they were able to purchase a second field with a whopping 56 plots.

“We were able to reach our target much quicker. Months instead of 20 years! If some of the Directors [of the CIC] were to leave now.... it [the land] is still there for everybody to rent.” Andy, Tregarth Community Association CIC

Challenges and lessons learnt

When the community farm was put on sale in 2017, the CIC successfully raised money from both members and the public to buy one of the fields. At the time they were paying a 25 year lease on their second field and the rent went towards purchasing it, this was a very slow process of buying the field. Trying to raise funds from other funders was proving difficult because at the beginning their

organisation wasn't established enough and there was little clarity over the private or community ownership of the land.

What has been achieved?

Receiving £16,700 from Resilient Green Spaces meant that the land was returned to the community and is secured for them for the long term. It has enabled them to decrease the plot rents, making food growing even more accessible.

Their next step is exploring how to improve water management on their site, potentially using solar pumps to pump their 10,000l water tank from a nearby river and provide water butts for individual plots.

Tips for other sites

- Shop around for different types of funding and check that you fit the criteria before you start filling the forms
- Ensure that your site has good water supply
- Try to get decent land or explore no-dig if the land is not good enough, for example in an urban environment
- Stick with it on the first knockback, and eventually it will all work out!

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