

Growing food locally: A success story in the making

The benefits of growing food locally are now recognised by our Council but only after a long campaign by many organisations and Sheffield Green Party. The Council has agreed to set up five pilot community growing plots including the Old Jessops Hospital site near the University roundabout. Vacant Council land is being identified and will be prepared for local people to cultivate and provide fruit and vegetables for their families.



Yes - but a word of caution

Cllr Jillian Creasy, who chairs the Allotments Advisory Group, gives some practical advice

She says, "Recent issues raised in the local media about allotments and local community schemes show that it is essential that all such schemes are properly planned. During a recent visit to Grimethorpe allotments, I was shown one community project that enabled lots of would-be gardeners from the allotment waiting list to start work together so that cultivation got off to a good start.

What lessons can be learned from this success story?

- Start small and let the project expand gradually.
- Match capital projects (acquisition or clearing of sites) with input by experienced gardeners.
- Support local organisations with a strong track record of community engagement and practical gardening experience.

Food growing is popular and increasingly important in these times of unemployment, health inequalities and rising prices. Let's not be deterred from expanding food growing opportunities in Sheffield."



South Yorkshire
Country Markets

Nottingham NHS leads - Sheffield lags

Nottingham City Hospital and the Queen's Medical Centre are saving more than £6 million per year by catering with fresh and locally sourced ingredients.

Their 'farm-to-plate' scheme saves £2.50 per patient as well as giving support to local farmers and saving around 150,000 food miles a year. The scheme could save NHS hospitals up to £400 million per year if it was extended across the country.

Green campaigner **Bernard Little** says: "Nottingham have shown that local sourcing is cost effective and gives real benefits to patients, staff and the wider community. We will continue to press NHS hospitals in Sheffield to follow suit."

FACTFILE

Allotments:

In Sheffield there are over 3000 allotments in over 70 sites. Allotments close to the Broomhill area include Hagg House, Hagg Lane & Walkley Bank. More information, including how to apply, is at www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside/allotments

Sheffield Country Markets:

Saturdays 9am to 12 noon The Scout HQ, Spooner Rd, Broomhill. S10 5BL
www.sycountrymarkets.co.uk

Grow Sheffield:

An active network of individuals and groups promoting urban organic food growing.
www.growsheffield.com

GREEN ACTION

Sheffield Green Party published our city food strategy in February 2010. If Low-carbon food production is at the centre of the city's economic plans it provides real benefits for everyone, including job opportunities, better health and cleaner air. We will push for our proposals to be a key part of the evolving Sheffield food plan.

Our successful July 2010 motion asked the council to write to all Sheffield MP's asking them to support the Public Bodies (Sustainable Food) Bill. If passed, this would introduce mandatory health, environmental and social standards for the £2 billion every year that is spent on public sector food in schools, hospitals, care homes, and all other public bodies.

Greens questions transport plans

Sheffield Green Party has called for substantial changes to the South Yorkshire transport strategy, which is now under consultation. We agree that the strategy needs to make it easier for people to change their travel patterns. But the strategy needs to do much more to tackle congestion, road safety and air quality. We need to move away from car use, with a significant increase in walking, cycling and public transport.



Cllr Rob Murphy, Green Transport spokesperson, comments: "To improve health, increase road safety & tackle congestion, we need to give people a real alternative to travelling by car. Improving public transport & the safety of pedestrians and cyclists would be of benefit to all road users."