



A community-led project to convert open space land into a new allotment site

Lesmahagow Development Trust Allotments

Lesmahagow Development Trust was established in 2009 to enhance the facilities and environment of Lesmahagow. After a range of community engagement events, individuals and community groups expressed an interest in turning open space land close to Brockettsbrae into allotments. Allotments were seen as offering community benefits as well as having the potential to run wider health and educational projects. With the support of Forest Enterprise Scotland, a long term lease of the land was secured via the National Forest Land Scheme.



Converting open space land into a community-led allotment project: how a concerted effort can deliver big community benefits.

Background

The allotments near Brocketsbrae were opened in 2015 as part of an initiative undertaken by the recently formed Lesmahagow Development Trust. The site has provision for 30 allotments and is easily accessed by foot or bike but car parking is also available.

How does it work?

The Trust established a relationship with Forest Enterprise Scotland. To secure use of the site, the National Forest Land Scheme was identified as the most appropriate route. Through this process the Trust secured a long-term lease: enabling Forest Enterprise Scotland to support the project through provision of the land. The lease passed the rights and responsibilities of running the allotments to the Lesmahagow Development Trust. The lease also satisfied the conditions of the main funder, the Climate Challenge Fund.

Reflecting on the project and lessons learnt

With hindsight more time spent establishing timescales at the start of the project would have been beneficial. For example gaining an earlier understanding of the level of evidence required for the application, and the time taken to acquire the lease required further discussions with funders to make sure their support was still available.

At times, there was an over reliance on email, which can introduce delays. This project demonstrates why it is important to get key project partners around the table at an early stage. It is vital that actions, responsibilities and timescales are understood and managed from the outset.

But taking account of these challenges the satisfaction of seeing the allotments open and in use by local people makes all the effort worthwhile.

Looking ahead

The allotments were opened in 2015. Allocating allotments is the next step with priority given to local residents. Interest from other interested groups will then be taken into account. Next steps also include plans for a storage shed, a community hub area and toilet facilities.

For more information about the Lesmahagow project visit www.lesmahagowdevtrust.com

For further information on our work with communities please contact

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