

Report on SAGS proposals for People's Gardens Scotland body
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Good morning

Unfortunately, as you have heard Robin Harper cannot be with us so I have been asked to say a few words about the latest proposals from SAGS.

All of us here, on a Saturday in June, are passionate about allotments. We know they contribute to our health, our diet, our spirituality; to biodiversity; the education of our children and our own understanding of the natural environment.

Plots are not just for us, the gardeners. Shiona MacPhail has found that, on average, at least 20 people directly benefit from each plot - our families and friends eat the produce; neighbours visit to enjoy the greenspace; stressed colleagues sit and quietly listen to the birds; flowers and fruit are given to local old folks homes, the church or members of our clubs.

As you will hear today, many of us are working voluntarily and with amazing energy at the grass roots level in our local sites - renovating, regenerating and transforming them.

Now SAGS would like the Government to recognise 'People's gardens' - allotments, community gardens, community orchards, school gardens, hospital grounds, greens gyms. To acknowledge their importance and role in our society and make them key vehicles for carrying out the agenda of the Scottish Executive. To ensure they are respected and supported by ALL our Councils and elected representatives.

In your Conference papers you will find the outline of our proposals for a body

Peoplesgardenscotland, similar to Sportscotland which advises the Government on all matters pertaining to sport - planning, education, standards for the number of sports pitches and facilities, funding etc.

This proposal for Peoplesgardenscotland is just a beginning. We, in SAGS, do not know how to convince the Scottish Executive of the need for this body. Nor are we clear yet about the precise remit, strategy or action plans. We need your help and input. For the well-being of Scotland- the land and the people, we need People's Gardens in Scotland to be recognised, respected and supported - to be appreciated as central contributors to the Gross National Happiness of our society.

please read the proposal; have it at the back of your minds as you listen to our speakers; take it back to your associations and organisations; talk about it on the plots and in your community huts; let us know how we can make it happen.

Email jenny at secretary@sags.org.uk, write to me at 31 Hyndland Road, Glasgow G12 9UY or contact any member of the committee.