

Introduction

The Scottish Government in their 2009 National Food and Drink policy publication made a clear commitment to strategically support allotments and recognised that the legislation surrounding allotments was complicated and needed to be updated. One of the Scottish Government's 2011 Manifesto Commitments was to review this legislation.

In the summer last year a consultation on the proposed content of a Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill (CERB) asked people what changes should be made to the existing legislation on allotments. It raised a number of issues around clearer definitions and legislative frameworks regarding allotments, allowing greater community access to un/under used land assets for Grown Your Own (GYO) purposes.

The current consultation builds on this work and asks more specifically about the ways in which it could be revised. Scottish Allotments and gardens Society have submitted a response on the published form. This document provides some more data and evidence to back up our suggestions.

Aim :

SAGS proposes that the aim should be to produce a legal framework for allotments that

- recognises that many of the drivers for the existing legislation are still extant.
- provides the mechanism whereby all Scotland's people have the opportunity to grow food to support themselves and their families on an allotment.
- enables safe, supportive, inclusive allotment sites to flourish

Why we need to protect allotments

Allotments are important for people's health¹; sustainability²; ecology³; food⁴; families; restoration-mental well being⁵; fulfil a spiritual need⁶

¹ Allotment gardening and health: a comparative survey among allotment gardeners and their neighbors without an allotment Agnes E van den Berg^{1,2*}, Marijke van Winsum-Westra¹, Sjerp de Vries¹, Sonja ME van Dillen^{2,3}
Environmental Health 2010, 9:74 <http://www.ehjournal.net/content/9/1/74>

Beyond Toxicity: Human Health and the Natural Environment Howard Frumkin, MD, DrPH, FACP, FACOEM© 2001
American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2 Published by Elsevier Science Inc.

GOOD PLACES, BETTER HEALTH A NEW APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH IN SCOTLAND
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN Scottish Government 2008

'Cultivating health': therapeutic landscapes and older people in northern England Christine Milligan*, Anthony Gatrell,
Amanda Bingley Social Science & Medicine 58 (2004) 1781–1793

² Gardens, Allotments and Government Regeneration Policy: A growing understanding?

Andy Milne, Chief Executive of the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF) Conference Papers: Centre for the
Built Environment Cultivating Sustainable Scottish Cities and Towns in the 21st Century June 2008

Cultivating Sustainable Communities for the 21st Century Gardens Allotments and New Developments

Steven Tolson, Director, Ogilvie Group Developments Ltd Conference Papers: Centre for the Built Environment
Cultivating Sustainable Scottish Cities and Towns in the 21st Century June 2008

³ Gardens, Allotments and Biodiversity: Creating rich natural habitats –Andrew Thin, Scottish Natural Heritage
Conference Papers: Centre for the Built Environment Cultivating Sustainable Scottish Cities and Towns in the 21st
Century June 2008

⁴ Setting the table Advice to Government on priority elements of sustainable diets Sustainable Development
Commission December 2009

⁵ Gardening Promotes Neuroendocrine and Affective Restoration from Stress Agnes E. Van Den
Berg and Mariëtte H.G. Custers Journal of Health Psychology <http://hpq.sagepub.com/content/16/1/3>

Why there should be a legal duty on the local authority to provide allotments

1. Land that can be used for cultivation is being lost. For example Glasgow's City Plan 1 identified a number of greenfield land releases to provide middle-to-upper market detached housing specifically to address the loss of families from the City⁷. Potential allotment sites have been lost. To grow successfully most plants need access to the light. In urban environments individual gardens are often over shadowed so cannot grow a variety of fruit and vegetables. An allotment site is usually large and open enough that all the plots have a good aspect. The local authorities own areas of land that fulfil the requirements for good cultivation.
2. Because of the need for land, allotments come under the green space strategy umbrella and are fed into the local development plans. However there are many competing calls upon local authority land so, if the SG accepts the arguments about the importance of allotments and the contribution they make across the political agenda then a law will give a local authority the authority to preserve and designate land for cultivation.
3. Allotment associations need support -allotments are a microcosm of the world. A crucial role of the local authorities is to provide the land, assist where required with the organisation and maintenance of the site and be the final court of appeal in the case of conflict or disputes among plot -holders.

Notes on contribution allotments to local authority agenda

1. Sustainability: allotments have been providing the benefits described above for over 150 years, and many sites are over 60 years old.
 - *there are 25 sites in Glasgow that are over 60years old .*
 - *on well established and well run sites the turn over in plots is about 5% a year showing they are an ' INVESTMENT ' for individuals and families.*
2. Food security: The price of food is rising rapidly and so is the cost of transport. Shetland has created two new sites in the last two years and there is a growing number of sites in the Highlands and Islands.
 - *a full size plot can keep a family in vegetables and fruit all year⁸.*Allotments complement market gardens because they raise awareness of: the potential for JOBS in the horticultural sector⁹; the taste of fresh, local produce; varieties of vegetables, fruit and flowers that can be grown in Scotland.
3. Community empowerment: independent sites or sites with devolved management are self financing and exemplars of community engagement.
 - *Four sites in Glasgow are owner occupied and three others are independently run.*Of course allotments are microcosms of the world and conflict can arise . However with support these issues can be addressed and contained.
4. Climate change: The climate challenge fund has accepted the role allotments can play in reducing carbon emissions. ¹⁰
5. Biodiversity: allotment sites are often large enough(1ha) to support a range of habitats. Plot holders grow different things so there is a diversity of plants, starting with the early fruit bushes such as gooseberries through to the late flowering herbs that support bees and insects.¹¹ Plot-holders nourish and conserve the soil with it's myriad micro- organisms and this in its turn feeds the birds and insects. The size of the individual plots can enable the

⁶ www.theecologist.org

⁷ www.glasgow.gov.uk housing.

⁸ www.sags.org.uk Peter's Produce

⁹ Growing Scotland 2007 www.sags.org.uk

¹⁰ a low carbon route map ccf.keepsotlandbeautiful.org; case study Wellesbourne allotments: www.freshproduce.org.uk

¹¹ Allotments and Biodiversity, Gardening in Harmony with Nature www.glasgow.gov.uk

plot-holders to undertake a virtuous circle of cultivation replenishing the soil and so be waste free.

6. Health and well being- allotments are restorative spaces; places for physical exercise that is all year round; places where the elderly can meet both others of their own generation but also families and young people¹²
7. Education: schools and inter-generational groups have community plots on allotment sites. Enables the young children to participate in and learn from the allotment community.

Cost to local authorities – on-going costs:

Item	Present position	Cost savings that could be found.	Support required:
Administration	Edinburgh and Glasgow have full time allotments officers some other local authorities have part time officers <i>Edinburgh allotments officer is financially funded by the allotment's rent</i>	Devolved management reduces the admin costs by collecting all the rents and taking on responsibility for site inspections	Allotments officer role would include practical advice on horticulture and management issues.
Maintenance	Fences, water supplies, trees	Devolved management takes on this responsibility	Established sites should be in good repair and needs/ skills for new sites assessed.
Recycling	Skips and green cages	Sites should not require skips except in exceptional circumstances such as storm damage, plot holder leaving a mess etc	Potential for community engagement realized.
Support and conflict resolution	Various approaches but allotment officer is final appeal.	Conflict could be reduced.	Ongoing need to find third party resolution for conflict

Cost to local authorities – initial costs:

Item	Present position	Cost savings that could be found.	Comment:
Cost of land	Local authorities often have suitable land but tied up for development	Triple bottom line accounting would show benefits allotments	Need not be either/ or for housing etc- need integrated approach to developments and planning.
Cost of developing site	Councils only have legal obligation to provide land and access anything else is bonus	Councils should work in partnership with potential plot- holders and the local community to agree development site.	The Scottish Allotment Site Design Guide ¹³ gives examples of choices and good practice
Cost of promoting allotments	At present Councils do not promote allotments	Councils working with Forum/Federations could access latent demand and encourage a significantly greater number of people to work allotments.	Positive benefits for the Council's health, community, education and environment agenda but needs commitment in finding suitable land and supporting nascent groups.

¹² Growing Scotland www.sags.org.uk

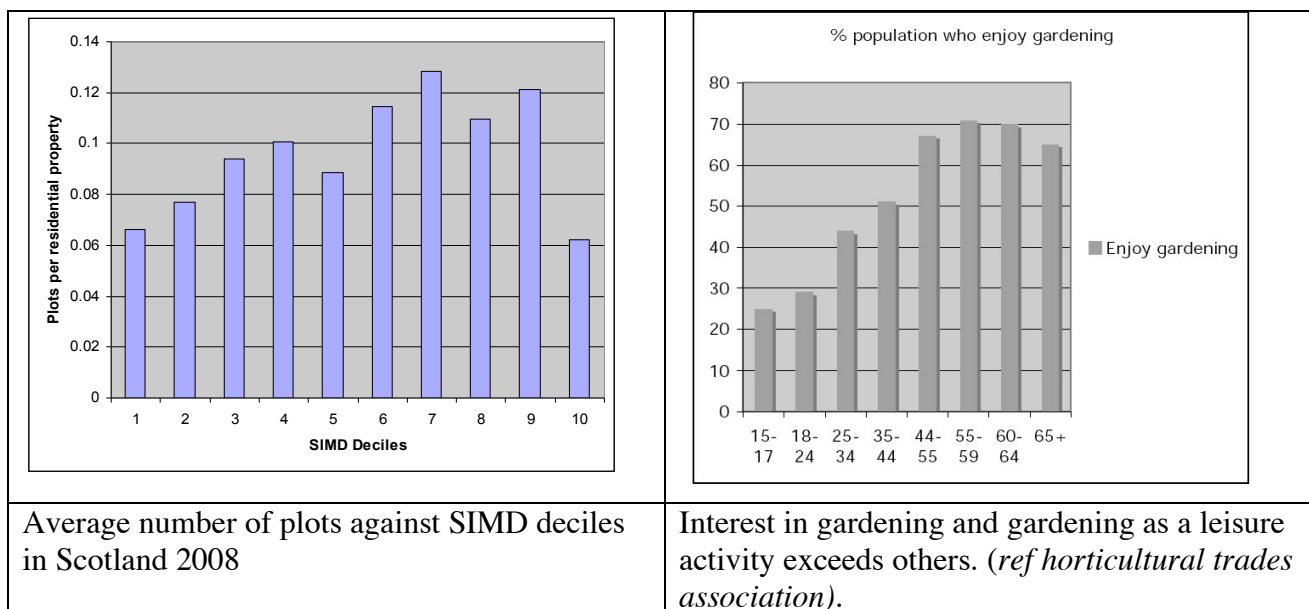
¹³ Scottish Allotment Site Design Guide www.sag.org.uk available June 15th 2013.

Cost of Maintaining sites	Many council sites are centrally managed	Lease site to associations; support them in becoming self-sufficient and sustainable	There are many owner/occupied sites that have existed for over 50 years.
Change of use for Council land	On some sites Councils have to mow the grass and avoid fly tipping etc	Conversion to allotments save the Council maintenance costs	Council's should identify potential allotment sites in areas of under-used land.

Additional comments

1. Note need for new legislation for insuring allotment association that is easy for small groups to undertake - even SCIO is daunting
2. Fair rent – basic rent for land should be comparable with agricultural rents; should not be pay back for acquisition of land but could cover cost of services – skips, water, mainenance.
3. Diversity of sites and differing needs of plot-holders should be recognised. Spectrum varies from simple sites with minimum governance to modern sites with access for special needs, community plots, community huts and strong engagement with the local community.
4. Growing Scotland report 2007 ¹⁴ showed the popularity and benefits of gardening and also the inequality of provision:

area	population	%children	Flats	without car	no in houses with gardens	Access to gardening
Glasgow	609,370	20.4%	73%	67%	162,000	27%
Bridgeton	7113	19.2%	88%	84.2%	435	6%



Local Authority Concerns.

1. Increase in plots between 2007 and 2010

¹⁴ www.sags.org.uk

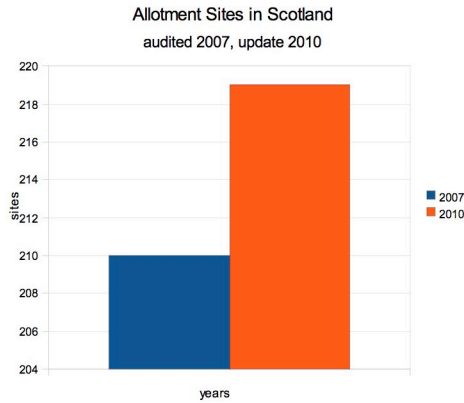


Table 1:

LOCAL AUTHORITY ONLY - Number of plots in 2010 (have been some changes since then)

NOTE: No of plots does not include independent (owner/occupied and leased plots) which would improve these numbers – for example Glasgow has 615 independent plots so total number plots in Glasgow is 1,486 which would give 1 plot per 400 people

council	number sites	no. plots	population	No People for each Council plot:
Aberdeen CC	22	440	217,120	493
Aberdeenshire C	7	36	245,780	6,827
Angus C	1	24	110,570	4,607
Argyll & Bute C		0	89,200	89,200
Clackmannanshire	does not manage allotments	0	50,630	50,630
Dumfries & Galloway C	6	110	148,190	1,347
Dundee CC	4	64	144,290	2,255
East Ayrshire C	no council allotments	0	120,240	120,240
East Dunbartonshire C	no council allotments	0	104,580	104,580
East Lothian C	2	41	97,500	2,378
East Renfrewshire C	does not manage allotments	0	89,540	89,540
Edinburgh CC	21	1321	486,120	368
Eilean Siar	no data	0	26,190	26,190
Falkirk C	no council allotments	0	153,280	153,280
Fife C	12	238	365,020	1,534
Glasgow C	25	870	592,820	681
Highland C	1	20	221,630	11,082
Inverclyde C	no council allotments	0	79,770	79,770
Midlothian C	1	26	81,140	3,121
Moray C	no data	0	87,720	87,720
North Ayrshire C	no council allotments	0	135,180	135,180
North Lanarkshire C	does not manage	0	326,360	326,360

	allotments			
Orkney Islands C	3	58	20,110	347
Perth & Kinross C	does not manage allotments	0	147,780	147,780
Renfrewshire C	3	97	170,250	1,755
Scottish Borders C	6	71	112,870	1,590
Shetlands Islands C	3	100	22,400	224
South Ayrshire C	3	221	111,440	504
South Lanarkshire C	2	107	311,880	2,915
Stirling C	3	137	89,850	656
West Dunbartonshire C	2	33	90,570	2,745
West Lothian C	no data	0	172,080	172,080
Scotland	127	4465	5,222,100	1170

TABLE 2: Amount of land required in each authority to satisfy demand of 1 plot per hundred population¹⁵ Note the number of plots includes independent (owner occupied and private plots) taken from the 2007 Audit Finding Scotland's allotments and from SAGS information up to present time. We suspect there are more sites since 2010 that we have not identified.

council	population	Area sq k	No plots from 2007 audit	plots 2013 update	No plots required:	Area land required/ha	% land in area	equivalent number golf courses
Aberdeen	217,120	186	482	0	1689	23	0.121	0.3
Aberdeenshire	245,780	6,313	155	91	2212	29	0.005	0.4
Angus	110,570	2,182	168	37	901	12	0.006	0.2
Argyll & Bute	89,200	6,909	28	0	864	12	0.002	0.2
Clackmannanshire	50,630	159	88	34	384	5	0.032	0.1
Dumfries & Galloway	148,190	6,426	112	73	1297	17	0.003	0.2
Dundee	144,290	60	558	0	885	12	0.197	0.2
East Ayrshire	120,240	1,262	72	10	1120	15	0.012	0.2
East Dunbartonshire	104,580	175	0	0	1046	14	0.080	0.2
East Lothian	97,500	679	78	76	821	11	0.016	0.2
East Renfrewshire	89,540	174	6	35	854	11	0.065	0.2
Edinburgh	486,120	264	1,419	28	3414	46	0.172	0.7
Eilean Siar	26,190	3,071	0	0	262	3	0.001	0.0
Falkirk	153,280	297	0	36	1497	20	0.067	0.3
Fife	365,020	1,325	492	87	3071	41	0.031	0.6
Glasgow	592,820	175	1,320	53	4555	61	0.347	0.9
Highland	221,630	25,659	71	247	1898	25	0.001	0.4
Inverclyde	79,770	160	58	0	740	10	0.062	0.1
Midlothian	81,140	354	52	0	759	10	0.029	0.1
Moray	87,720	2,238	18	22	837	11	0.005	0.2

¹⁵ Figures based on freedom of information request 2010 and statistical data from www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/02/2421/1 There have been more sites created in last three years

North Ayrshire	135,180	885	30	185	1137	15	0.017	0.2
North Lanarkshire	326,360	470	139	51	3074	41	0.087	0.6
Orkney Islands	20,110	990	58	0	143	2	0.002	0.0
Perth & Kinross	147,780	5,286	83	60	1335	18	0.003	0.3
Renfrewshire	170,250	261	64	0	1639	22	0.084	0.3
Scottish Borders	112,870	4,732	256	77	796	11	0.002	0.2
Shetlands Islands	22,400	1,466	0	55	169	2	0.002	0.0
South Ayrshire	111,440	1,222	149	90	875	12	0.010	0.2
South Lanarkshire	311,880	1,772	113	9	2997	40	0.023	0.6
Stirling	89,850	2,187	143	20	736	10	0.004	0.1
West								
Dunbartonshire	90,570	159	127	22	757	10	0.063	0.1
West Lothian	172,080	427	46	116	1559	21	0.049	0.3
Scotland	5,222,100	77,925	6,385	1,514	44322	591	0.008	8.4

TABLE 3: Possible cost to Councils:

This depends on the level of services and infra-structure of plots and the sites, a larger site will be cheaper for the services required than a small site. If the Council puts in paths and huts then the cost will increase. However under current legislation they are only required to give access. Fencing can be a major cost but a simple fence with hedging is acceptable unless there is a problem with rabbits or deer.

We have assumed an average of £750 per plot but this could be reduced to zero if plot-holders are just leased the land to £2,500 per plot for a very well serviced site.

Given the contribution allotments make to the health, education, community and other budgets and also the skills that could be gained in creating a site there should be a number of funding streams that could support this

council	population	No plots required:	2010 no plots in existence	new plots since 2010	NEW plots required	possible cost £M
Aberdeen CC	217,120	2171	482	0	1689	1.27
Aberdeenshire C	245,780	2458	155	91	2212	1.66
Angus C	110,570	1106	168	37	901	0.68
Argyll & Bute C	89,200	892	28	0	864	0.65
Clackmannanshire C	50,630	506	88	34	384	0.29
Dumfries & Galloway C	148,190	1482	112	73	1297	0.97
Dundee CC	144,290	1443	558	0	885	0.66
East Ayrshire C	120,240	1202	72	10	1120	0.84
East Dunbartonshire C	104,580	1046	0	0	1046	0.78
East Lothian C	97,500	975	78	76	821	0.62
East Renfrewshire C	89,540	895	6	35	854	0.64
Edinburgh CC	486,120	4861	1,419	28	3414	2.56
Eilean Siar	26,190	262	0	0	262	0.20
Falkirk C	153,280	1533	0	36	1497	1.12
Fife C	365,020	3650	492	87	3071	2.30
Glasgow C	592,820	5928	1,320	53	4555	3.42
Highland C	221,630	2216	71	247	1898	1.42
Inverclyde C	79,770	798	58	0	740	0.56

Midlothian C	81,140	811	52	0	759	0.57
Moray C	87,720	877	18	22	837	0.63
North Ayrshire C	135,180	1352	30	185	1137	0.85
North Lanarkshire C	326,360	3264	139	51	3074	2.31
Orkney Islands C	20,110	201	58	0	143	0.11
Perth & Kinross C	147,780	1478	83	60	1335	1.00
Renfrewshire C	170,250	1703	64	0	1639	1.23
Scottish Borders C	112,870	1129	256	77	796	0.60
Shetlands Islands C	22,400	224	0	55	169	0.13
South Ayrshire C	111,440	1114	149	90	875	0.66
South Lanarkshire C	311,880	3119	113	9	2997	2.25
Stirling C	89,850	899	143	20	736	0.55
West Dunbartonshire C	90,570	906	127	22	757	0.57
West Lothian C	172,080	1721	46	116	1559	1.17
 Scotland	 5,222,100	 52221	 6,385	 1,514	 44,322	 33.24

Recommendation:

We recommend that COSLA and their constituent members visit their local sites, consult with their local allotment associations and understand what benefits allotments can bring to their people.