



Cultivating Communities

Community Food Growing in the Scottish Borders
Review of the 2021-2026 Strategy and Vision for
2026-2031

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Why Do We Have a Food Growing Strategy

Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

Local Authorities must

- Produce a Food Growing Strategy
- Identify opportunities for food growing
- Support allotments and community growing
- Increase access to land for cultivation





The First Strategy (2021-2026)

Cultivating Communities

Approved in March 2021

Aims

- Increase access to community food growing
- Develop stronger food growing networks
- Support allotments and community gardens
- Build sustainable communities
- Encourage learning and skill sharing





What Have We Achieved

Five Years of Progress
Highlights include

- Establishment of Grow Borders Network
- Hosting quarterly networking events
- Monthly newsletters
- 538 enquiries supported
- 97 site visits across the region
- Stronger partnership working
- Produced 5 Annual Allotment Reports
- Helped with 29 funding bids





Grow Borders Network - Connecting Communities

The network has enabled groups to

- Share ideas
- Learn from each other
- Share funding opportunities
- Promote each others project events

How

- Meet quarterly, 3 times in person, once online.
- Visiting each others growing projects and gaining inspiration from each other
- Members encouraged to shape meeting content





Grow Borders Network - Connecting Communities





Community Food Growers Newsletter

Monthly newsletters distributed to

- Partner organisations
- Grow Borders members
- NHS Staff
- Other council departments
- Stakeholders





Case Study - Orchard Park Community Garden, Kelso

Transformation of a Scottish Borders Council former playpark into a thriving community food growing garden





Case Study - The process

Early 2023

- Approached by elected Member asking for garden development.
- SBC approached stakeholders asking for interest in project collaboration

Early 2023-
Sept 2023

- SBC developed funding bid for Shared Prosperity Fund with support from 3 Registered Social Landlords and Food Growing Charity, Abundant Borders

February 2024
– April 2025

- Garden built
- Garden planted up
- Twice weekly volunteer sessions ran
- Pick your own days ran
- Community Art projects hosted
- Local people encouraged to use space

April 2025 –
present

- Lease agreed with Abundant Borders who continue to host volunteering session at the garden. Local people have access to a free community food growing garden



Case Study – Success, Challenges, Outcomes

Successes

- Partnership working
- Thriving greenspace
- Providing free food
- Volunteer opportunities
- Improved biodiversity
- Workshop opportunities – Jam making etc.

Challenges

- Community buy in
- Sustaining momentum
- Project end – what happens next

Orchard Park Kelso Community Garden - 'Opening Day' - 26.04.24





Case Study – Success, Challenges, Outcomes

Outcomes

- Increased opportunities for local people to grow food
- Strong volunteer involvement
- Improved stakeholder connections
- Enhanced biodiversity



Demonstrating Best Practice Wilton Lodge Park Walled Garden, Hawick

The Walled Garden has become

- A demonstration site
- Volunteer hub
- Community resource

2025/26 Achievements Include

- 4,200 volunteer hours
- 180 volunteer sessions
- 28 active volunteers





Greener Gateway Community Awards

In 2022 we diversified our awards to include 'Cultivating Communities' award for community food growing

In 2024 we added a School Award for projects which included food growing, Sustainability, Biodiversity.

Now, in 2026 we have more schools and community groups entering than ever before.



What Did We Learn Review of 2021-2026

What worked well:

- Grow Borders Network
- Community engagement
- Volunteer support
- Partnership development

Challenges:

- Capacity constraints
- Growing demand for support
- Need for improved land access
- Modernising allotment processes



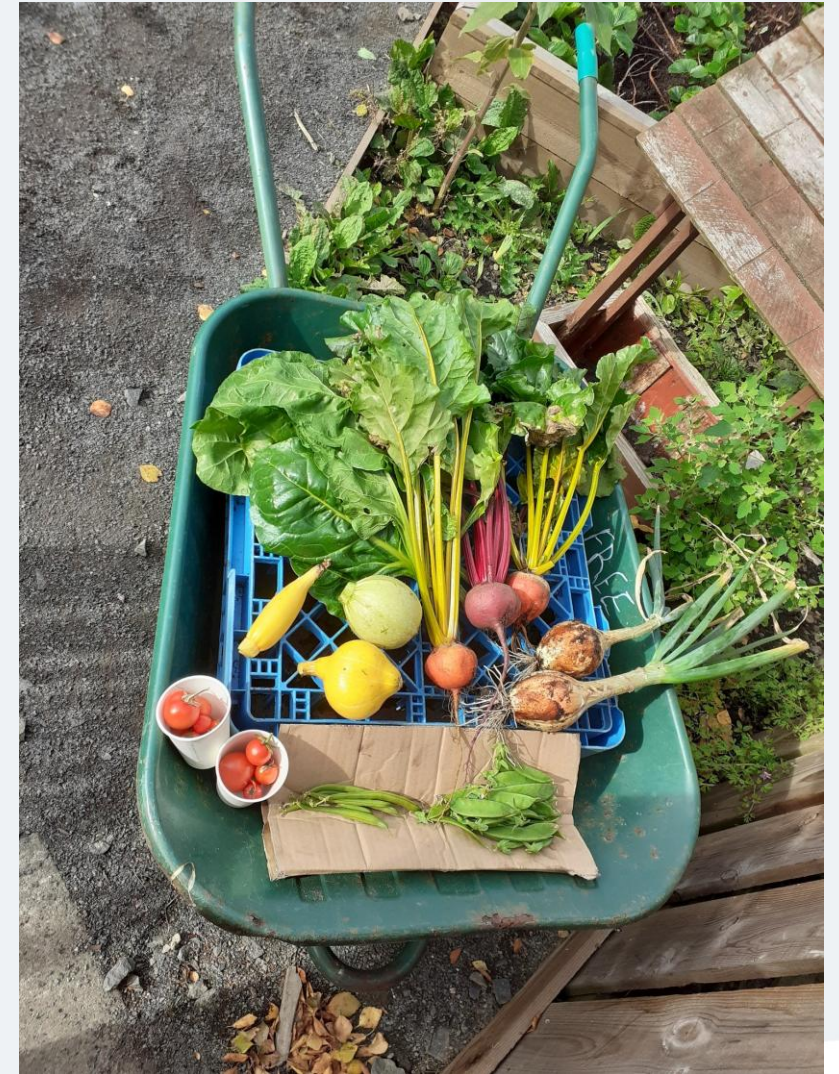


The New Strategy 2026-2031

Building on Success and Priority Actions

What Will We Deliver

- Expand Grow Borders membership
- Continue networking events
- Publish regular newsletters
- Promote the Walled Garden as a centre of excellence
- Support land access partnerships
- Modernise allotment allocation systems
- Support community-led allotment sites





Looking Ahead - Our Vision By 2031

We want to see:

- More people growing food
- More community growing spaces
- Stronger local networks
- Better access to land
- Increased biodiversity and Sustainability
- Healthier, more resilient communities
- Improved allotment processes





Thank you
Questions