

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 - Allotments Waiting List Register

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on the actions that are being undertaken in response to duties placed on the Council under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which provides a legal framework that promotes and encourages community empowerment and participation in growing food.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee consider the Allotments Waiting List Register update which reflects the duties placed on local authorities arising from Part 9– Allotments of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The Council's Business Continuity Committee on 16 April 2020 adopted Argyll and Bute's first Community Food Growing Strategy. The Strategy's vision is to encourage and enable people in our community, who wish to grow their own food, by providing information on potential community food growing spaces, advice and guidance.
- 3.2 Developing the Strategy was a duty placed on the council by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which requires each local authority to produce a food growing strategy. It also places a duty on the council to establish and maintain an allotments waiting list register and to produce an allotments report for the area each year.
- 3.3 At the time of preparing this report 168 individuals are included on the Register.

Area	Number of Individuals on the register - July 2024
Bute and Cowal	53
Helensburgh & Lomond	75

Area	Number of Individuals on the register - July 2024
Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands	21
Oban Lorn & The Isles Area	19

- 3.4 Argyll and Bute Council has three allotment sites (as defined by the Act which are those on Local Authority land) one in Helensburgh and two in Rothesay. They are each managed by allotment associations, with spaces offered to individuals when they become available. Other Community Food Growing Spaces such as community gardens and schools exist within a number of mainland and island sites which are managed by local dedicated community members and school groups.
- 3.5 As the Council does not currently directly manage allotments, Legal and Regulatory Support Officers have established relationships with allotment sites and other land owners. With agreement from those that have submitted their details these are then passed to these independently managed sites in anticipation of securing land for the purposes of growing food.
- 3.6 In order to complement the Community Food Growing Strategy Legal and Regulatory Support provide a dedicated community growing spaces website, which can be accessed by following this [LINK](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/community-growing-spaces) (https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/community-growing-spaces). The website holds useful information relating to Community Empowerment, including allotment legislation and guidance for community groups who are interested in growing their own food. Alongside colleagues from the Communities and Partnership Team this website is currently under review to enhance the existing support available for our customers.
- 3.7 The Communities and Partnership Team support Council asset requests and have received several expression of interest from individuals and groups regarding the use of Council assets and land for community gardens and spaces for food growing. Some of this interest has reached a positive conclusion in terms of the establishment of community growing spaces.
- 3.8 Ardrishaig Community Garden, for example, have a licence to develop a community garden and food growing space in the local park. Scenic Sandbank raised the funding to acquire a vacant plot of land to develop Community growing spaces and allotments for food growing. Requests from these groups involved the setting up of community organisations to raise funds to manage and run the community garden/ growing spaces.
- 3.9 Officers are committed to giving advice and support to individuals' and groups to encourage and enable people wishing to grow their own

food. There is a webpage detailing how to submit an expression of interest in using council assets, which can be accessed by following this [LINK](#).

- 3.10 There are also various examples of food growing initiatives being taken forward by third sector partners within Argyll and Bute. Fyne Futures Food, a registered charity and social enterprise on the Isle of Bute, are involved in various food growing initiatives. Pupils from North Bute and St Andrew's Primary Schools have been attending Bute Produce with staff attending the schools to help pupils to explore soil health, seeds, growing in pots, and plant husbandry.
- 3.11 Fyne Futures Food have also been involved in 'Heart Seeds' which is about celebrating different culture through food. Linking with the resettlement team; there have been food sharing events with people from a wide variety of place including people who have chosen Argyll and Bute as a place to live and work. From these events a list of plant based ingredients are being grown at Bute Produce with support from volunteers and employability placements. A harvest festival will include dishes from across the world being cooked using these ingredients.
- 3.12 Finally, Incredible Edible Bute manage a number of sites around Rothesay and Port Bannatyne which grow seasonal, herbs, fruits and vegetables. Battery Place, Rothesay was the 1st site and was set up under licence with Argyll and Bute Council as an alternative to dismantling and grassing over raised beds. The latest garden set up is the Friendly Garden at Port Bannatyne, which Incredible Edible volunteers took over and have brought back into use. Each site is looked after by volunteers with regular weekly work parties. The produce of these public sites is freely available for residents and visitors to harvest. Volunteers also receive training in horticulture, cookery skills and certificates in First Aid and Food Hygiene.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The adoption of the Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy met the Council's duty under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, officers continue to provide information to support and signpost individuals and community groups who wish to grow their own food.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – None
- 5.2 Financial – None
- 5.3 Legal – Meeting our duty to produce a Food Growing Strategy, Allotment Waiting List and Rules and Regulations under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

- 5.4 HR – None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – None
 - 5.5.1 Equalities – None
 - 5.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None
 - 5.5.3 Islands Duty – None
- 5.6 Climate Change – None
- 5.7 Risk - Failure to report the Allotments Waiting List Register means we do not fulfil our duties placed on local authorities arising from Part 9 – Allotments of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 5.8 Customer Service – None
- 5.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – None

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

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For further information contact: Stuart McLean, Committee Manager

Telephone 01436 658717 - stuart.mclean@argyll-bute.gov.uk