

# Community Growing in Cornwall

The impact and potential of local sustainable food growing in Cornwall



Produced by Sustainable Food Cornwall and the University of Exeter, supported by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board's Community Growing Working Group

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## Executive summary

Community growing is **sustainable food production that actively engages people within, and for the benefit of, the immediate community**. We define community growing schemes as community projects and initiatives that involve the growing of edible produce and its sale and/or distribution to members of the local community, providing direct links between food producers and consumers.

The Community Growing Working Group was asked to:

- Define community growing and understand its core characteristics
- Survey town and parish councils to assess the level of local council awareness and support of community growing
- Interview some of the most successful community growing schemes and develop case studies
- Document the multiple health, environmental and socio-economic benefits of community growing and threats to the continued success of community growing in Cornwall
- Review the evidence collected to produce findings and recommendations

In summary, community growing was found to be:

- Highly diverse, operating at a range of scales with a range of funding models, from fully grant-funded through fully self-financing to fully voluntary, always with the delivery of community benefit as its core purpose
- Widely distributed, delivering multiple social, educational, economic, environmental and resilience benefits to thousands of people across Cornwall
- Broadly supported by people in all walks of life with community growers experiencing high customer and member retention, and increasing demand for community grown food, and for participation in community growing
- Providing valuable formal and informal educational and training opportunities in a range of disciplines e.g. horticulture, retail and business operations. Education and training are integral distinctive features of many community growing projects
- Largely low-input, agroecological and regenerative, delivering a range of environmental, mental and physical, personal and community health and wellbeing outcomes that align with the Cornwall and Climate Emergency Development plans, and with Cornwall's Nature Recovery, Environmental Growth, Integrated Care and Health and Wellbeing strategies
- Enabling social innovation with the potential to support fundamental change
- Contributing to local food security directly (through food provision to people experiencing community food insecurity) and indirectly (through skills provision to enable people to grow their own food agroecologically)
- Succeeding against the odds, overcoming barriers including lack of funding, short-life tenure, lack of infrastructure and equipment

The key challenges for community growing in Cornwall are:

- There is not enough land available to satisfy existing demand for community growing spaces, and that demand is increasing
- Most community growing schemes would benefit from additional skills, funding, resources and support to flourish and deliver their full community value

**Key recommendations endorsed by Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023:**

1. Enable the benefits of community growing to be realised more widely through supportive policy interpretation and implementation, commissioning and operations
2. Champion and promote making appropriate sites available for community growing on public and private land holdings
3. Help support community growing projects and organisations with training, equipment, infrastructure, planning, finance, and effective community anchor organisations
4. Explore ways of strategically funding community growing, its support, infrastructure, expansion and resilience

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## Introduction

Community growing is **sustainable food production that actively engages people within, and for the benefit of, the immediate community**. We define community growing schemes as community projects and initiatives that involve the growing of edible produce and its sale and/or distribution to members of the local community, providing direct links between food producers and consumers.

Community growing schemes vary in scale, approach and purpose. Examples include community gardens and farms, allotment associations, community orchards and community-supported agriculture (CSA) schemes. Community growing provides access to fresh and nutritious food, thereby improving local food security and public health. These schemes support local farmers and growers, foster community connections and wellbeing, reduce the negative environmental impacts of the food we eat, and help to create a sustainable and resilient food system. There are further social benefits as projects provide an opportunity for community building, skills training and career development.

This report has been produced by a team of people who wish to better understand the scale and impact of community growing schemes in Cornwall, with a shared ambition to identify how to support and expand their work. The impetus for the work came from an experimental event designed to engage civil and civic society organisations in a goal for action that could galvanise both the community and the statutory bodies represented on the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board, working together for a positive future. The Civic Lantern event was held in June 2022 and the top goal agreed was to: “Give land and support for every community to have a sustainable growing scheme.”<sup>1</sup>

To further this goal, a working group was established to gather new information about existing community growing activity and its impact in Cornwall. The group also produced a number of recommendations for the further development of community growing schemes and a short document went back to the Leadership Board for endorsement in June 2023. This report is intended to be used as a launchpad for further action to broaden and deepen action to support community growing across Cornwall.

## Background

Cornwall’s food system is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with the majority turning over far less than £100k a year.<sup>2</sup> Local farmers and related food suppliers and producers often secure poor margins on their products. Productivity in the food system is often low, and businesses can struggle to access local and regional markets. Furthermore, as a result of the current cost-of-living crisis and consequent rising levels of food insecurity in Cornwall<sup>3</sup> the food system is vulnerable to environmental and economic shocks, including climate and ecological emergencies, volatile input and output prices, continued uncertainties about global commodity prices and supply chains, resulting in challenges for both the producers and consumers of food.

The UK Government has recognised many of these challenges. Henry Dimbleby's National Food Strategy<sup>4</sup>, published in 2021, confirmed that fundamental changes are required in the UK food system to address multiple human, environmental and economic health challenges (see Appendix 1).

While many of the recommendations in the National Food Strategy<sup>5</sup> have yet to be implemented, the Government's net-zero 2050 climate change target<sup>6</sup>, the 25-year Environment Plan<sup>7</sup>, the new Agriculture Act<sup>8</sup>, as well as Public Health England's ambitions to tackle obesity<sup>9</sup> and other diet-related health conditions, are all related policy agendas that are critically important to the wellbeing of future generations.

Cornwall already has a wealth of local food initiatives seeking to promote positive change in the food system. However, these initiatives are largely operating on their own, with little opportunity for coordination between them, or access to wider support. To reap the benefits of a more regionalised food system, a new level of ambition and coordination is required. There is a significant opportunity to do more to support existing activity and foster new projects in Cornwall. This would enable the shift towards a more sustainable, regional food system that is exemplary for other parts of the UK and beyond.

Existing community growing initiatives in Cornwall encompass a wide variety of social, operational and finance models with a diversity of land tenure arrangements. To a greater or lesser extent they can be characterised in relation to four important dimensions (see Figure 1). In this regard, **proximity** captures the extent to which projects are accessible and visible at the heart of the local community. **Resilience** refers to the ways in which the project is focused on social and ecological resilience to support the community and how it contributes to the sustainability of the local ecosystem as well as adaptation to climate change. **Participation** reflects the scale of social engagement in the production and distribution of food. **Stewardship** concerns the extent to which the project nurtures the environment and community.

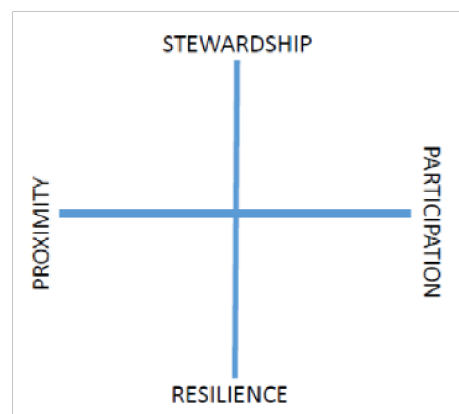


Figure 1: The four dimensions that characterise the diversity of community growing schemes

Our expectation is that expanding community growing schemes in Cornwall will generate important overlapping health, socio-economic and environmental benefits (see Figure 2).

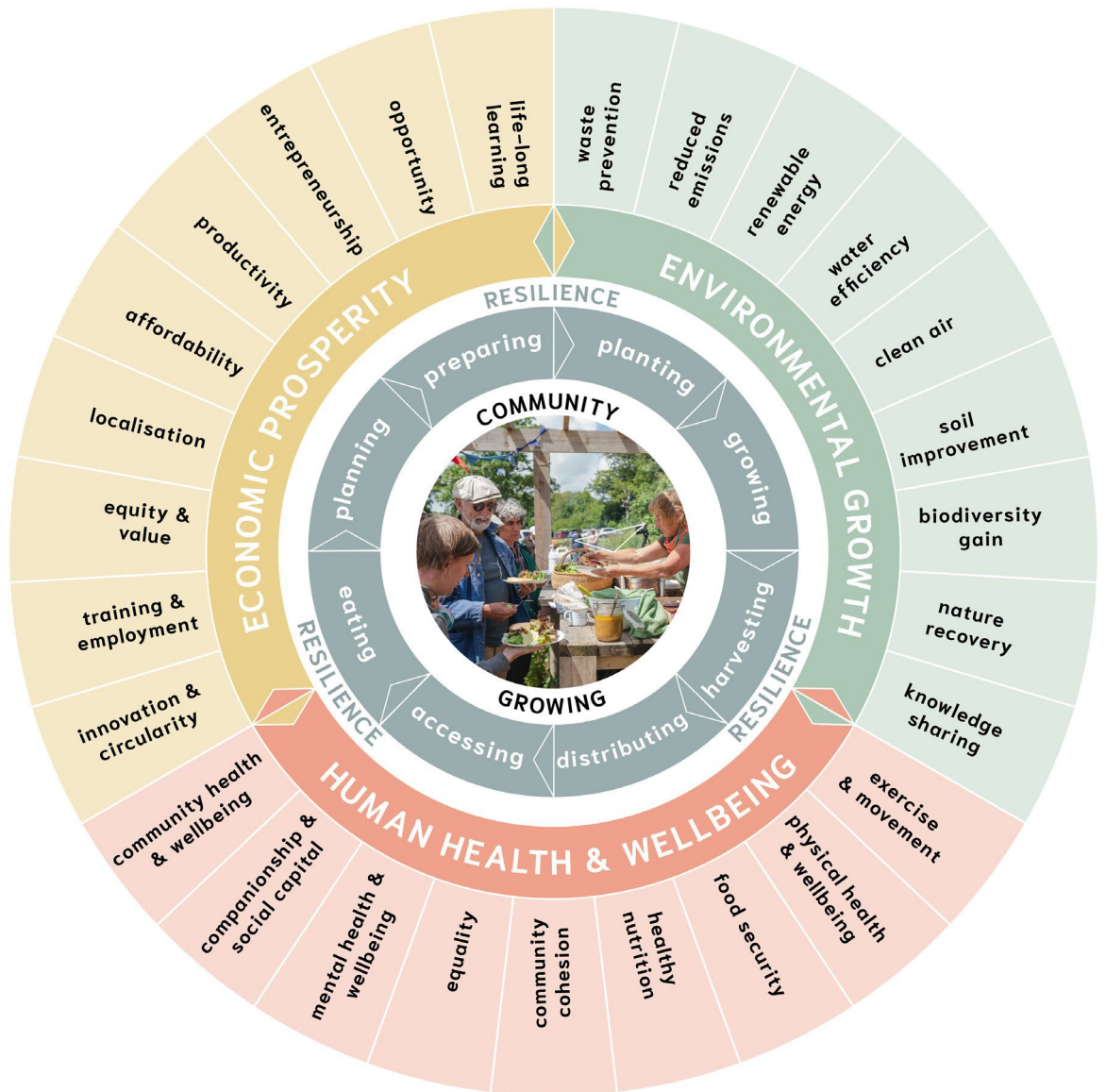


Figure 2: The overlapping benefits generated by community growing schemes

As indicated, benefits include improvements to human health such as enhanced mental and physical wellbeing through exposure to nature and physical activity, as well as the direct benefits that come from improved access to nutritious food. There are also important economic and social impacts that include access to training and skills development, employment, market access and development, food insecurity reduction, supporting local businesses and fostering community networks. In addition, the environmental gains include raising awareness and encouraging more sustainable behaviour amongst producers and consumers. This includes benefits to the ecosystem from agroecological production methods, alleviating levels of water, food and energy waste, and reducing carbon emissions via shorter supply and distribution chains.



## Mapping community growing in Cornwall

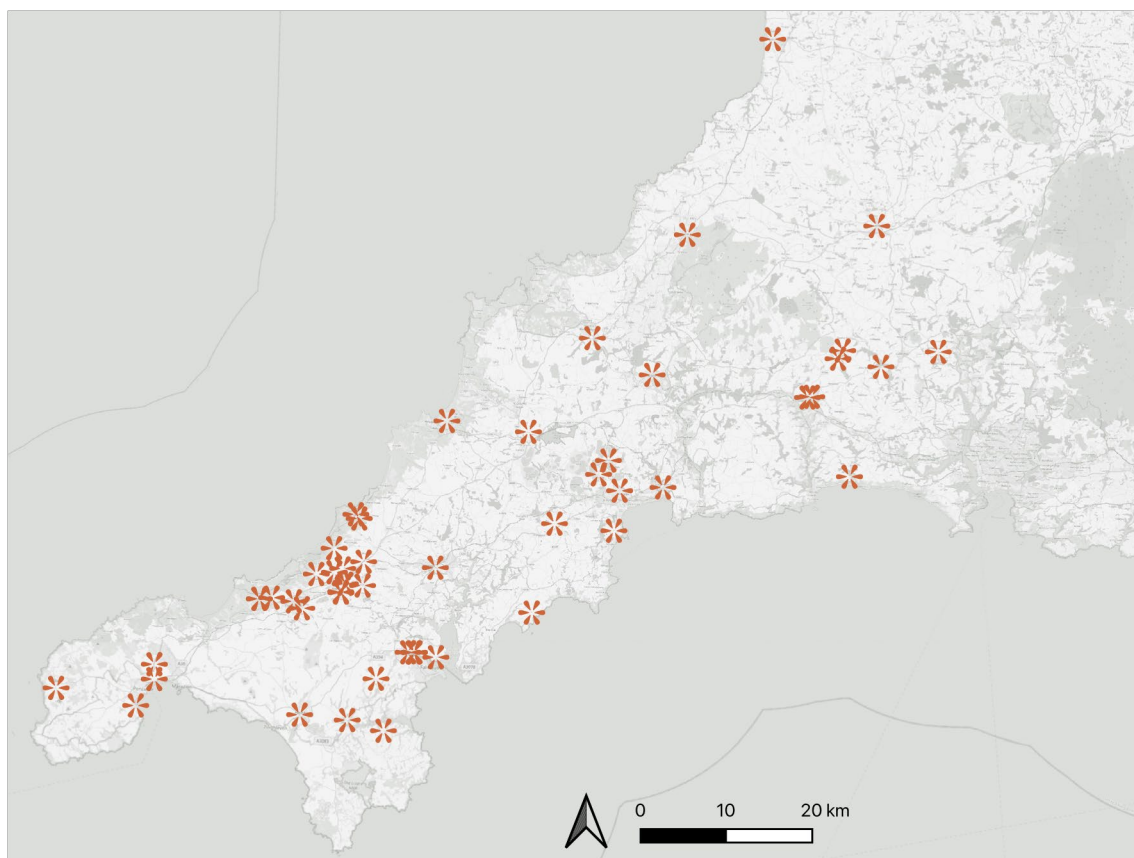


Figure 3: Survey of community growing projects in Cornwall

Between November 2022 and June 2023, the newly-constituted Community Growing Working Group conducted research to map the scale and impact of community growing, and to develop practical recommendations to support existing and new projects in Cornwall. This involved:

- Defining “community growing” and understanding its core characteristics
- Developing and sharing a new interactive map that registers a range of food production activities
- Surveying local councils to assess existing activity as well as awareness and support for community growing
- Interviewing representatives from a number of successful community growing schemes
- Documenting the environmental, health and socio-economic benefits as well as identifying any threats to the continued success of community growing as well as barriers to setting up new schemes
- Reviewing the evidence collected to produce a set of recommendations for action

The ambition is to use this work as a launchpad for further activity to support and expand community growing schemes in Cornwall. Full information about the survey of local councils and case study interviews can be found in Appendices 3 and 4 at the end of this report and a summary of the key findings is included below.

### Key findings from the research

As expected, we identified a diverse range of community growing projects, providing many social, economic and environmental benefits, reaching thousands of people in Cornwall. The map of these can be seen online at <https://sustainablefoodcornwall.org.uk/good-food-map/>

The list of Cornwall's community growing schemes can be found at Appendix 2.

Both are works in progress and may be updated by contacting Sustainable Food Cornwall.

The benefits of community growing are multiple and include the generation of significant levels of social capital and enhanced social connections<sup>10</sup>; enhanced levels of both physical and mental wellbeing<sup>11 12</sup>; reduction in stress levels<sup>13 14</sup>. Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust reported reduced GP visits and psychiatric interventions, reduced hospital visits, reduced medication and need for support from community protection notices, and lower demand for crisis visits to counsellors in a cohort of service users who were referred to the mental health charity Mind.<sup>15</sup> Many community growing initiatives are engaged in fighting food insecurity by distributing quality food to those facing financial struggles exacerbated by rising costs of living<sup>16</sup>. Community growing projects tend to have a positive impact on biodiversity and soil health, as well as reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the supply chain. Growers have a destination for their entire crop, thus reducing food waste, and buyers are better able to exercise ethical and sustainable social and environmental responsibility through their buying habits.

The greatest challenge for community growing projects is access to suitable land and this is further exacerbated by insecure tenure. Most community growing initiatives need grant funding to cover initial start-up costs and subsequent capital investment. A significant number rely heavily on grant funding to pay for staff and other core activities. The funding landscape is complex and variable and not all community organisations have the skills or experience to access it equally. Staff who run growing schemes often work long hours on low wage levels without proper sick pay, adequate pensions or paid holidays. Community growing schemes are likely to be small-scale and their reliance on significant volunteer input could threaten viability. There is a need for training or support in multiple operational roles and responsibilities including agroecological and organic production, volunteer management, equality and diversity, marketing, finance and business planning as well as specialised technical assistance. Further detail on the benefits of, and the challenges faced by community growers can be found at Appendix 5.

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils survey exposed strong support for this activity from local councils and just over half of the 54 respondents reported that allotments were already provided in their community. The most common number of plots was 30-60 although some had considerably more, and Truro reported having up to 100 allotments in their jurisdiction. Where allotments were available, there were a wide variety of arrangements for running the schemes including the council itself, allotment associations, community groups and private landowners. Significantly, all of the 11 major towns responding had allotment provision: Hayle, Fowey, Camborne, Truro, Newquay, Padstow, Wadebridge, St Austell, Falmouth, Bude and Looe. Many had waiting lists and in some places, there were long waiting times for sites (the largest site in Camborne had a six-year wait). Very few councils reported that they were currently providing any shared or community growing spaces, but there was a lot of interest in doing so and many had already considered the idea. As examples, Hayle

Town Council reported that they had an aspiration to set something up, St Dennis and St Erme councils were actively looking at the idea, and others would like to know more.

When asked about the barriers to doing more, the most common reply concerned access to suitable land. Some councils had their own land that could be considered but most would need help in approaching landowners and securing support. Other concerns included access to finance for purchasing land as well as costs for staff and resources such as fencing, gates and water supply. Other barriers with a single mention included: *Engaging community groups to take management of sites; Lack of involvement from the public; Funding for a project officer to coordinate projects.*

The community growing schemes study interviews further highlighted related points about access to land and finance to support local activity (see Appendix 3). While these projects are providing a wide range of benefits and engaging with people from all walks of life, there is a strong ambition for more to be done. Many respondents reported their frustration in spending a lot of their precious time applying for small amounts of funding at the expense of growing or helping communities. Others were struggling with lack of secure tenure to ensure access to the land, poor quality infrastructure and equipment, and the challenges of sustaining activity. Certainly there is insufficient land to satisfy existing demand for community growing spaces, and that demand is increasing.

### Recommendations for the further development of community growing in Cornwall

Gathering and reviewing this evidence has led the working group team to recommend a step change in support for existing and new community growing schemes in Cornwall.

There is an urgent need to develop a mechanism to **identify appropriate sites for additional community growing activity**. Once identified, these sites need to be matched with local community organisations to explore the further development of existing or new growing schemes. It is particularly important for public sector organisations (such as the National Health Service, councils, education providers and police) to lead by example, auditing their landholdings to see if there are opportunities to share any land. Sites that have been “orphaned” after Cornwall Council became a unitary authority, and those near highways, on council-owned farms, and in the grounds of schools and hospitals would be an obvious place to start. More could also be done to make full use of Cornwall Council’s Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (DPD) to encourage community growing more widely and particularly within new developments, through edible landscape design and enabling growers to live on their sites as appropriate.

There is an urgent need for **adequate and accessible funding** from the widest variety of sources. In this regard, there is scope to channel charitable and public sector finance to organisations that can use this resource to realise the important benefits for health, wellbeing and community. It would be possible to commission rigorous life-cycle assessments and evaluation studies to measure the diverse economic, social and environmental benefits provided by community growing projects. The new Community Area Partnerships in Cornwall could be encouraged to allocate funding to community growing and to provide ongoing support for community growing projects in their areas. Relatedly, they could help unlock access to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies that could be spent on local projects.

In this regard, a targeted approach could **encourage and enable local councils to proactively support and increase community growing** in their areas. Town and parish councils have many of the essential skills and reputation for financial rigour that could be highly beneficial to local development. They can be twinned with community growing organisations to work together to secure land, raise finance and develop new projects.

Existing and new community growing projects and organisations require **additional and easily accessible support with legal matters, governance, planning, finance, communication and community development**.

There would be great benefit in **fostering synergies across the sector**, ensuring that new groups add to, rather than duplicate or conflict with, existing projects, aiming for at least one main project in a 15-mile radius. There is scope for site visits, peer-to-peer learning, placements and twinning projects to foster a culture of shared endeavour and learning. Collective purchasing (bulk buy) of community growing inputs would also help to keep costs down and share expertise. Cornwall could champion a permacultural approach to the growth of a coherent ecosystem of thriving community growing initiatives and anchor organisations that help each other flourish.

These broad recommendations can be realised through the fulfilment of specific actions that together will strengthen and expand community growing in Cornwall, and thereby improve access to food and community resilience for one and all.

The specific actions are grouped by recommendation below:

### **Realise the multiple benefits of community growing**

- Advocate for community growing and support campaign activities to raise the profile of community growing and the value of its multiple benefits in Cornwall
- Recognise the role of community growing in creating health as well as treating sickness, and commission the health and wellbeing outcomes being delivered by community growing as an integral part of an integrated health and care system
- Commission rigorous lifecycle assessment and evaluation studies to validate and value the diverse economic, social and environmental benefits provided by community growing
- Explore opportunities for social innovation, embedding community growing approaches in new developments such as edible landscaping, residential gardening and supported self-management

### **Improve the availability of suitable sites for community growing**

- Create a matchmaking service and brokerage linking existing and would-be community with potential sites
- Supporting landowners with this activity to provide all necessary services to engage and reassure them such as: legal advice, health and safety information, as well as the good governance and management of the land that is to be shared
- Maintain an information rich map of community growing initiatives so that new groups add to, rather than duplicate or conflict with existing projects, aiming for at least one main project in a 15 mile radius

- Identify potential community growing sites at multiple scales within the estates of Cornwall Council and the health and education systems, e.g. within “orphan” sites left stranded or uncertain after Cornwall Council became a unitary authority, near highways, on council farms, school and hospital grounds
- Make full use of Cornwall Council’s Climate Emergency Development Plan Document to encourage community growing more widely, particularly within new developments for example through edible landscape design and by enabling growers to live on their sites as appropriate

### **Nurture a resilient network of thriving community growing initiatives and anchor organisations that provide mutual support**

- Encourage and enable parish, town and other local councils to proactively support and increase community growing in their areas
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and support among community growers through visits and placements to share techniques and best practice
- Provide targeted support and training to community growers, for example legal, technical, compliance

### **Develop funding mechanisms to enable and support community growing**

- Help the new Community Area Partnerships allocate funding to community growing and to support the establishment of new projects in their locality
- Update Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) spending policies to fund community growing, its support and expansion
- Invest in strong place-based anchor organisations that can support smaller volunteer-led community growing initiatives to start and grow
- Support collective purchasing (bulk buy) of community growing inputs through finance and brokering

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board endorsed these recommendations and actions at their meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023. The Community Growing Working Group will continue its work, advocating for and raising the profile of community growing to increase support for community growing activities in line with the recommendations and actions above so as to realise the step change needed.



**Appendix 1 –**

**The negative consequences of the food system in the UK**

Obesity	<p>In 2021, 26% of adults in England were obese. In Cornwall, 65.5% of over 18s were overweight or obese in the year to November 2022, with 26.7% of adults living with obesity. In Cornwall, 25.3% of reception age children carry excess weight compared to 22.5% in England<sup>17</sup>.</p>
Food insecurity	<p>Between April 2022 and April 2023, the price of a weekly basket of food has increased by 24-26%<sup>18</sup>. Between April 2022 and March 2023, the number of people that used a food bank for the first time was 760,000. During this period, in Cornwall, over 36,000 emergency food parcels were distributed by Trussell Trust Foodbanks alone, over 12,000 of those were for children under the age of 16<sup>19</sup></p>
Poor Quality Diets	<p>Only 31% of UK adults adhere to the 5-a-day fruit and vegetables intake<sup>20</sup>.</p> <p>In 2018 only 18% of children aged between 5-15 were eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day and 53% consumed fewer than three portions per day<sup>21</sup>.</p> <p>Research indicates that UK diets lead to vitamin and mineral deficiencies, particularly in selenium, potassium, magnesium and iron. The Economist's Global Food Security Index 2022 gives the UK a score for micronutrient availability of 30.1 against a global average of 67.8.<sup>22</sup></p>
Ill-health	<p>22% of children aged five in Cornwall have one or more decayed, missing or filled teeth<sup>23</sup>.</p> <p>9,945 people registered with a GP in Cornwall in 2019 had non-diabetic hyperglycaemia<sup>24</sup>.</p> <p>In 2021, 34,150 people in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were known to be living with diabetes<sup>25</sup>. The UK has the third highest sales by volume of ultraprocessed food per capita out of 80 high to middle income countries, and the most processed diet in Europe. A 10% increase in the consumption of UPFs is shown to elevate the risk of cancer by 12%<sup>26</sup>.</p>



Microbial and pest resistance in crops and livestock	Antimicrobial resistance driven by antibiotic use poses a catastrophic threat <sup>27</sup> . In the UK, 50% of antibiotics are used in agricultural practice and this use is predicted to increase by 67% from 2010 to 2030 <sup>28</sup> .
Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions	Agriculture is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the UK with an estimated 41% generated from the food system <sup>29</sup> .
Biodiversity loss	Breeding birds on farmland have declined by 45% from 1970 to 2018 and nearly 41% of wildlife species have declined <sup>30</sup> .
Food waste and pollution	44% of households in Cornwall do not engage with the fortnightly recycling service and more than 35% of the rubbish put out for collection is food waste <sup>31</sup> .
Degradation of soils, freshwater and wider ecosystem	Rivers and streams suffer from soil erosion due to the heavy rainfall in autumn and winter, causing the displacement of gravel bases and their subsequent replacement with washed topsoil. This process disrupts the natural ecosystems and wildlife that rely on these waterways <sup>32</sup> .
Poor working conditions	Part-time, seasonal and low-paid employment tends to dominate food production and processing <sup>33</sup> .
Low wages and margins for business	The challenge of low wages extends throughout Cornwall, impacting different localities differently. St Ives, with 48% of its workers, and Camborne and Redruth, with 44%, have a substantially higher proportion of low-paid employees compared to the national average. This indicates that the issue of low wages is not confined to specific areas but affects a significant portion of Cornwall's workforce <sup>34</sup> .



**Appendix 2 –  
List of community growing schemes in Cornwall**

This list of community growing schemes is a work in progress and represents our best understanding at the time of publication. The authors would be grateful for corrections, additions and updates via [hello@sustainablefoodcornwall.org.uk](mailto:hello@sustainablefoodcornwall.org.uk)

<b>Community supported agriculture (CSA)</b>		
Bosavern Community Farm	St Just TR19 7RD	veg box scheme, farm shop, market stalls, allotments, education/skills
Camel CSA (Camel Community Supported Agriculture CIC)	Wadebridge PL27 7JZ	veg box scheme, education/skills, community orchard
Community Roots	Porthtowan TR4 8HL	veg box scheme, education/skills
Goonown Growers	St Agnes TR5 OUX	veg box scheme, market stall, education/skills
Grassroots Garden	Radnor, Redruth	veg box scheme, education/skills
Grown by Newquay Orchard	St Columb TR9 6HT	veg box scheme, wholesale, education/skills, affiliated to Newquay Orchard
Soul Farm	Flushing, Falmouth	veg box scheme, education/skills online food hub, market stall, wholesale
<b>Community orchards</b>		
Camelford Community Orchard	Lanteglos, Camelford	Managed by Camelford Town Council
Castle Park	Liskeard PL14 3AX	Make Space for Nature project with mini-orchards, now managed by Liskeard Town Council.
Crantock Street, Community Garden	Newquay TR7 1JR	Community garden - connecting people and nature
Harrowbarrow & Metherill Agricultural Society (HaMAS)	Harrowbarrow & Metherell, Calstock	Vineyard run by community. Originally a CSA / orchard, but lost its land. Affiliated with Tamar Grow Local
Landulph Orchard Green	Landulph, Saltash	Landulph Parish Council
Maker with Rame Community Orchard	Cawsand, Torpoint	Managed by Permaculture Kernow on behalf of Maker with Rame Parish Council
Millbrook Community Orchard	Millbrook, Torpoint	Managed by Millbrook Parish Council
Newquay Orchard	Newquay TR7 2SL	Traditional orchard, also forest garden, market garden, CSA, education/skills
Neetside Community Orchard	Bude EX2 8LD	Managed by Bude Friends of the Earth
Parish of St Ives Community Resilience Project	Pensilva, Liskeard	Community garden orchard
Saltash Apple Project	Saltash	Community orchards project with sites in schools, parks and nature reserve

South Hill Community Orchard	Golberdon, Callington	South Hill Association for Renewable Energy (SHARE) / South Hill Parish Council
St Ives Community Orchard	St Ives TR26 2HS	Also grows perennial vegetables
St Day Community Orchard	St Day, Redruth TR16 5NB	Initiated and managed by St Day and Carharrack Climate Action Group
St Enoder Community Orchard	Indian Queens	near Indian Queens School + mini-orchard at Trevarren Green, managed by St Enoder Parish Council
St Dominick Community Orchard	Saltash PL12 6SN	
St Neot Community Orchard	St Neot, Liskeard PL14 6PB	Managed by St Neot Parish Council
Treffry Road Community Fruit & Nut Orchard	Truro	Truro City Council / Treffry Road Community Association
Trefusis Community Orchard	Redruth	Redruth Community Orchard Project, supported by Resilient Orchards Cornwall CIC
Tehidy Orchard	Camborne	Managed by Cormac with aid of volunteer rangers, supported by Resilient Orchards Cornwall CIC
Trenoweth New Community Orchard	Redruth TR16 4AH	Redruth Community Orchard Project, supported by Resilient Orchards Cornwall CIC
Truro Community Orchard	Truro TR1 3AY	Managed by volunteer tree warden / Truro in Bloom at Lys Kernow (New County Hall)
<b>School gardens and farms</b>		
Ludgvan School Farm	Penzance TR20 8EX	Animal care, gardening, forest school
Mawnan School Nature Garden	Near Falmouth TR11 5HQ	Garden embedded into every aspect of the curriculum
Mounts Bay Academy	Penzance TR18 3FD	
Pelynt Primary Academy	Pelynt, Looe PL13 2LG	Growing veg in raised beds
The Roseland Academy Community Farm	Tregony TR2 5SE	All year 7 students have compulsory farm lessons - animal care, horticulture and farm maintenance
Sir Robert Geffereys School Community Farm	Landrake, Saltash PL12 5EA	Fruit and vegetables, animal care, forest school
Stratton Primary School Farm	Stratton, Bude EX23 9AP	Polytunnel, vegetables. Linked to Cornwall Grows CIC
<b>Community and/ or social gardens, farms, fields, hubs</b>		
Boscawen Farm	Blackwater, Truro TR4 8EZ	Care farm, part of Robert Owen Community (ROC) Skills & Wellbeing

Chacewater Community Garden	Chacewater, Truro TR4 8PZ	Community garden
CHAOS Farm	Portloe, Veryan, Truro TR2 5PJ	Care farm, part of the CHAOS Group
Choose Nature	Higher Wheal Martyn, St Austell PL26 8XG	Linked to Badger Forest School, intending to launch community growing activities at Wheal Martyn
Chyan Cultural Centre (Chyan Community Field)	Penryn TR10 9BT	Vegan organic, permaculture and forest gardening site
Cornwall Grows	Stratton, Bude	Starting at Stratton School. Linked to Bude Climate Partnership - delivering community growing for its £2m action plan
East Langford Care Farm	Kilkhampston EX23 9SA	Care farm, started growing veg in 2023
Food Troops Kitchen and Garden	Redruth TR15 2JF	Community kitchen and growing space in Victoria Park, Redruth
Friends of Rosebud PZ87 Memorial Gardens & Bowjey Woods	Penzance TR18 5EQ	Community garden, mini-orchard
Get Growing – CN4C	Camborne TR14 7TS	Community-led allotment, run by Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change (CN4C)
Gorfenna	St Ive, Liskeard PL14 3LX	Care farm
Growing Links	Gulval, Penzance TR18 3FJ	Community garden, veg bag scheme, meals, education/skills
Grown That Way	Callington PL17 7HW	Part of Together We Can Succeed
Growing Together Cornwall	St Agnes	Helping first time gardeners to grow their own food.
IntoBodmin Community Garden	Bodmin PL31 2JX	Small community garden with raised beds
Kehelland Trust	Camborne TR14 ODD	Care farm, market stall, community orchard
Liskerret Community Centre	Liskeard PL14 4AP	Community garden
Loveland	Penryn TR10 8AJ	Community field project, part of Falmouth Food Co-op
Love Lane Community Wildlife Garden	Penzance TR18 4PS	Also community veg plot and forest garden orchard
Par Bay Community Garden	Par	Part of Par Bay Big Local
Higher Culloden Farm	Camelford PL32 9TL	New community market garden, considering conversion to community supported agriculture model
Holifield Farm Project	Gweek TR12 6UJ	Care farm
People and Gardens	Bodelva, St Austell PL24 2SG	Plant nursery / veg bag scheme, providing work and skills for people with learning disabilities or emotional impairments,
Perennial Harvest	St Austell	Community-focused gardening workshops
Ro Dama Farm CIC	Camborne TR14 ODW	Community garden, orchard, rewilding, events and retreats
Tamar Grow Local CIC	Callington PL17 8EX	Online food-hub, market stalls, farm start, machinery pool, juicing and honey co-ops, food distribution loop, allotments, vineyard, education/skills
Tregovenek	Pensilva, Liskeard PL14 5QU	Community farm
Treverbyn Community Hall	St Austell PL26 8TL	Community garden, preparing to convert to community supported agriculture model
The Growing Project	Pensilva, Liskeard PL14 5NH	Providing work and growing skills for vulnerable groups
Worlds End Forest Garden	St Just TR19 7HS	Community permaculture forest garden

<b>Incredible Edible</b>		
Incredible Edible Helston	Helston	
Incredible Edible Penryn	Penryn	
Edible St Austell	St Austell	





**Appendix 3 –  
Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) survey summary**

At the request of the Community Growing Working Group the Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) did a two-week survey of town and parish council members about existing growing spaces in their patches (2<sup>nd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023)

**Main findings:**

- There was a very positive response to the request for information with 54 member councils completing the questionnaire. This represents a good response rate of 32%
- Just over half (54%) reported that allotments were provided in the parish, with a wide variety of arrangements for running the schemes, from the council itself to allotment associations, community groups and private landowners
- Very few respondents are currently providing any shared or community growing space although there were a few exceptions. However, there was a lot of interest in doing so and many had already considered the prospect
- Three out of every four respondents were not aware of any other community growing initiatives in their parish that were not run by the council. A few specific local schemes or organisations were mentioned
- Unmet demand for allotments and growing schemes was high with long waiting lists and long waits apparent in some areas
- There was overwhelming interest in providing community growing spaces but the single biggest barrier was clearly access to suitable land and this was highlighted in over half of the responses
- Almost all the respondents were willing to be contacted for further information and provided contact details

**Town and Parish council summary survey results: provision of allotments and growing spaces**

No. of T&PC councils that responded to the information request	54
Of these: No. of parishes reporting they have allotments	29
No. of allotment sites reported	62
No. of allotment plots reported	+625
No. of councils with waiting lists/unmet demand	33
No. of shared growing spaces mentioned	6
No. of community orchards	3

### Geographical spread of respondents by allotment provision

The table below shows respondents by area and positive and negative results for existing allotments.

	No of survey respondents WITH allotments in parish	No of survey respondents NO allotments in parish
Far southwest area: e.g Penzance, Hayle, Helston	4	2
Mid Cornwall area: e.g Camborne, Falmouth, Truro, St Austell, Newquay.	14	7
Northeast area – e.g Padstow, Bodmin, Camelford, Launceston, Bude, Wadebridge	7	9
Southeast area – e.g– Fowey, Liskeard, Looe, Saltash	4	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>
Total respondents excluding duplicates 54	54%	46%

All of the 11 major towns responding had allotment provision: Hayle, Fowey, Camborne, Truro, Newquay, Padstow, Wadebridge, St Austell, Falmouth, Bude and Looe.

Survey respondents and allotment provision were higher in the mid-Cornwall area. Respondents without allotment provision were spread across the county but with more parishes reporting no current allotment provision in the east – 27 responses came from parishes in the east of Cornwall and of these 16 had no current allotment provision.

Responses were received from a wide geographical area (see above) and a wide range of council sizes. Large town councils including Truro, Newquay, St Austell, Looe and Bude sent in responses as well as many much smaller parishes and one parish meeting.

### Headline results

#### Section 2: Allotments:

Yes: 29		
No: 25		
Who runs the allotments?	Council	9
	Community group	9
	Private landowner	7
	Community Interest Company	4
	Allotment Association	2

Just over half the councils, 29 of the 54, reported that allotments were provided in the parish. Where allotments were provided there were a wide variety of existing arrangements for running the schemes. Seven private landowners were mentioned – including a Cornwall Council tenanted farm, Tregothnan and Bolitho estates.

**Number of allotment sites and plots**

The number of allotment sites within each parish ranged from one to four and the most common number of plots in total was 30-60 although some councils do have considerably more. Truro for example reported 91-100 plots in total.

**Does the council provide shared group or community food growing space? E.g. community allotment plots/community orchard/vegetable planters etc?**

Six respondents answered positively to this question with significant interest in providing such facilities.

Some specific shared growing schemes that were mentioned included: a community garden run by Incredible Edible in St Austell, a recent project between Lost Gardens of Heligan and Tremayne Estates in Mevagissey, a community fruit and nut orchard in Truro, Bosavern Community Farm in St Just in Penwith, a community orchard being planted in March in St Enoder, and a community orchard run by Friends of the Earth in Bude.

**Are you aware of any other community growing initiatives in the parish?**

Three quarters of respondents were not aware of any other community growing initiatives in their parish. A few mentioned specific schemes including: Falmouth Food Co-op, privately run allotments in Greenbottom, Pelynt Academy where a scheme is being considered, Stratton Primary School farm, Camel Community Supported Agriculture in Wadebridge.

**To your knowledge are the existing allotment or community growing schemes fully used?**

Very few of the 55 respondents reported that the existing schemes were not fully used. Just under two thirds (33) reported that they had a waiting list or other indicator of unmet demand and in some cases waiting lists were very long and the numbers high.

**Would your council be interested in providing some community growing space or extending local provision?**

There was overwhelming interest in providing community growing space with only four respondents answering negatively to this question. A number of councils were in the process of thinking about such a scheme or extending existing provision to incorporate a shared space. The problem of finding suitable land was mentioned by a large number of respondents.

**Does your council have land, or are you aware of landowners who might have suitable land available for a community growing space in the parish?**

There was a mixed response to this question. Around 10 parishes answered yes, there was land that could be used. Around 18 answered no, they did not have land or weren't aware of landowners with suitable land.

However, around half of the respondents said that they would need to identify land and approach other landowners or were already negotiating for suitable land. A few had found landowners reluctant to sell. The possibility of approaching large landowners such as the Duchy, Tregothnan or converting grazing land was mentioned.

**Are there specific barriers your council would face in extending provision?**

By far the most common barrier was again the lack of access to suitable land, highlighted by 29 respondents. The need for finance associated with purchasing land as well as costs for staff and resources such as fencing, gates and water supply were also mentioned but the main barrier was the provision of land. Other barriers with a single mention included: engaging community groups to take management of sites, lack of involvement from the public, funding for a project officer to coordinate projects. Around a dozen councils responded that there were no specific barriers or left the question blank.

Over 50 respondents said they would be interested in knowing more about the growing spaces project.



**Appendix 4 –  
Case studies of community growing schemes in Cornwall**

- A. Bosavern Community Farm, St Just in Penwith
- B. Camel Community Supported Agriculture, Wadebridge
- C. Growing Links, Penzance
- D. Loveland, Penryn
- E. Newquay Orchard, Newquay
- F. Soul Farm, Flushing
- G. Tamar Grow Local, Callington

### A. Bosavern Community Farm



Established in 2010, Bosavern is a not-for-profit social enterprise (a community benefit society) located just outside St Just in Penwith. The farm comprises 36 acres and was bought by the community with funds from a Lottery grant. There are currently seven acres of land under production, and another field given over to community allotments. A total of 4.5 acres are currently rented from Cornwall Council and the rest are owned. There are seven large polytunnels in their market garden and they are currently installing a rainwater harvesting system having secured funds from South West Water and Penwith Landscape Partnership (Heritage Lottery Fund). They have several beehives and sell the honey working in partnership with an independent beekeeper and they have around 400 free range chickens. There is a farm shop and stalls at two local farmers' markets as well as a veg box scheme delivering weekly to homes and businesses across Penwith.

Bosavern Community Farm objectives are to:

- Produce and sell local food
- Provide community access to land and its produce
- Provide opportunities for the local community to come together and learn about growing food, agriculture and sustainable living



The farm's main activities are a market garden and field crops that supply 80-100 boxes locally, a farm shop, and two weekly farmers' markets in Sennen and St Just. In addition to the growing activities, they have up to 400 chickens, and beehives on site. They also supply several local cafes, restaurants, pubs and B&Bs.



The farm's untraditional constitution allows people to invest their money in order to derive social benefit for the community rather than shareholders expecting a financial return on their investment. They are the largest CSA (community supported agriculture) project in Cornwall and the second oldest. They were awarded the Community Group Award 2021 by St Just Town Council during the pandemic for their work feeding the public during lockdown and supporting unemployed adults. They achieved an outstanding certificate from the Royal Horticultural Society in 2023 for their pollinator planting, and were the winner of the Cornwall Sustainability Awards in 2015 and highly commended in 2021.

They currently employ two full-time staff (head grower and chief development officer) and two part-time (assistant grower and finance officer). They are supported by a thriving community of local volunteers, as well as WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) volunteers from the UK and all over the world. Without the support of the 30+ volunteers, Bosavern would be unsustainable.

Bosavern are not currently registered as organic but they adhere to the Wholesome Food Association guidelines and organic principles. They use no chemicals on the land, minimal mechanisation, minimal inputs in relation to their outputs, they have some areas of no-dig and use lots of compost and chicken manure to improve soil quality and increase carbon capture. They have a strong ethos of protecting and enhancing biodiversity on their land and plant hundreds of trees every winter to create shelter belts and a community woodland. They recently secured funding from Penwith Landscape Partnership to create wildlife scrapes (boggy transient ponds) and have also established several wildflower meadows which they cut for hay.



They have established a Community Bee Garden which includes a training apiary and a Bee Education Shed. They work in partnership With the Cornish Black Bee Company – the relationship means Bosavern benefit from the bees’ pollination services and the beekeeper uses the farm shop and farmers’ markets as an outlet to sell their honey.



Bosavern offers land-based, experiential learning for young people including weekly visits from the special needs unit at Cape Cornwall School, work experience for college students, and tree planting and aftercare with a wide range of youth groups. It plans to offer work experience placements for under-18s in the near future. Its work with schools is currently being developed to offer curriculum-linked themes such as ecology, plant reproduction, biodiversity, weather and climate, food security, seasonality, food provenance, water cycle, carbon cycle, crop rotations, food chains, caring for chickens. It also offers talks to the wider community on regenerative farming, soil science, composting, pollinators, wildflowers and conservation.

Between 2020 and 2022 Bosavern received European Social Funding from Cornwall Council to offer supported placements to local, unemployed and economically inactive adults. This project has helped over 40 people, many of whom secured housing, placements, paid employment and qualifications and reported significant improvements to physical health and mental health. Many volunteers describe Bosavern as a “safe place” where they feel welcome and a sense of connection and belonging.

There are 28 allotments on the site, and there are plans to provide more in the adjacent field subject to planning consent and funding. Bosavern's diversification vision will become more viable if and when the farm is able to secure a four-acre field located in the heart of the farm for an expanded crop rotation for core growing activities. Within Penwith, Bosavern is nurturing an embryonic network of growers drawn from neighbouring market gardens, regenerative farms and community growing schemes by arranging informal bi-monthly socials for mutual support and collaboration.

The top priority at the farm over the next two years is to develop designs and secure funds to locate a shared resource of conservation and agricultural machinery and equipment in a new barn and to create a learning centre, offices and cafe in the farmyard buildings. The proposed new Eco-Hub Learning Centre will enable the delivery of more events, courses, placements and workshops for local and international volunteers and to help network and inspire other landowners. It will be suitable for adults and youth groups and offer practical skills in both regenerative agriculture, permaculture, sustainable food production, cookery, retail, repairs and maintenance, creative and conservation skills. At a recent consultation event there was unanimous support for this initiative and 86% expressed support for a staffing project to run alongside and provide support for learners and volunteers.

## B. Camel Community Supported Agriculture

# love your veg



## Camel Community Supported Agriculture

Camel Community Supported Agriculture CIC is a not-for-profit community-run local food enterprise set up in 2009 and is the most long-standing CSA in Cornwall. It was started by a group of local organic growers involved in the Transition Town movement who wanted to set up a community growing scheme. The Soil Association provided support to hold a public meeting in Wadebridge in December 2008. About 40 people turned up, decided to elect a steering group and the first 15 veg boxes were available the following June. Members of the subscription scheme get a share in the produce, have an equal say in how it's organised and are invited to take part in voluntary activities.

Camel CSA's main aims are to:

- Produce and share healthy, seasonal, local food
- Connect people with the land where their food is grown
- Improve food security, increase resilience and reduce food miles
- Mitigate climate change and enhance biodiversity

The CSA grows vegetables and fruit on 2.7 acres of land at Treraven farm which is owned by the Gaia Trust and is held on a rolling agricultural tenancy. As the Gaia Trust is an environmental charity with environmental goals that are very closely aligned with those of the Camel CSA, they feel secure in the tenancy.



Around 80 member households now subscribe for a weekly veg box delivered by cargo bike or electric van. Camel CSA produces approximately 85% of the contents of its veg boxes, with the other 15% sourced from other local growers. Last winter it provided a weekly supply of vegetables for Winter Warmer soup at the community café run by Concern Wadebridge and continues to donate veg on a regular basis. Members are encouraged to donate their weekly box when they go on holiday to households in need, identified by the NHS wellbeing team at two local GP surgeries.



Camel CSA has six part-time workers - a lead grower, two seasonal growers, one grower/ electric van delivery driver, one picking and packing coordinator and one administrative coordinator, representing a full-time equivalent of 1.3. There are about 30 regular volunteers who help with growing the produce, picking and packing the veg boxes, bike delivery, administration and finance, publicity and marketing, and building and site maintenance. The CSA relies on volunteers in all aspects of its operations including in the core management team and without them its operations would be compromised. It is a small organisation and the paid roles do not cover all the key roles and responsibilities, so there is a fine balance that needs to be carefully managed.

Its subscription revenue meets the costs and ensures self-sufficiency but grant funding is needed for any capital projects of investment. Camel CSA serves its local geographic community within an approximate 10-mile radius which covers a largely rural and coastal area encompassing Wadebridge, Bodmin, Camelford, Port Isaac and Polzeath. There is a lengthy waiting list for membership.

Over the last year Camel CSA secured funding and in January planted an orchard of 37 fruit trees on the site. These were supplied by Forest for Cornwall and are a mixture of local heritage and popular varieties of mainly apple trees.

Camel CSA has worked steadily to increase the cultivated areas put down to no dig beds, and is now 100% no-dig. This innovation has increased the amount of healthy, nutritious, chemical-free vegetables produced to supply local people.



It also got funding from the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network (WREN) to decarbonise its site operations and purchase an electric mower, hedge trimmer and brush cutter powered by its existing on-site solar photovoltaic and battery system. Further funds were allocated by WREN to build a cool store for vegetables and a solar-powered unit to produce on-site compost extract to complement its no dig, no-chemical growing approach. This is watered on to the soil to introduce beneficial microorganisms to improve soil health.

Camel CSA offers volunteers the opportunity to enhance their health and wellbeing and work outdoors as part of a team. Support and informal training is also offered to vulnerable adults and young people who want to share in the growing experience. Some are directed to Camel CSA by local charities and support agencies, others arrange to take part on an independent basis. This year's membership survey of CSA members recorded significant support for establishing a Community Fund to share regular supplies of produce with less well-off members of the community.

It has been working with the Westcountry Rivers Trust's farm net zero team to provide workshops about composting and no-dig growing methods for local gardeners and fellow growers.

### C. Growing Links



Growing Links CIC is based in Gulval, Penzance and works to regenerate a more sustainable, accessible and resilient food system through a range of activities. Ludgvan Parish Council asked the Bolitho Estate for land for the Penwith Community Development Trust in 2011 and Growing Links was created in 2013 and incorporated as a CIC in 2014.

The project cultivates 1.5 acres with a further 2.8 acres kept wild for biodiversity benefits.

Growing Links aims are to generate a more sustainable, resilient and accessible local food system through:

- Education
- Chemical-free horticulture
- Applied permaculture design
- Access to local food
- Healthy seasonal cooking lessons
- Bringing communities together to celebrate and eat

It grows a range of vegetables, soft fruit, cut flowers and herbs and produces enough to feed 50 families per week plus 20 volunteer lunches six days a week. Growing Links Community Garden is designed as a therapeutic space for all to enjoy. People are invited to participate in horticulture for wellbeing, or just come and enjoy the garden. Participants can volunteer or become a “veg bed fellow” by sponsoring a spade, a growing patch, or pots and pans for the kitchen. Customers can buy from a weekly market stall in Penzance. Friends commit to a monthly subscription to support the projects.

There are 250 active volunteers every week, including 30 formal trainees and a few full-time volunteers, and three full-time and nine part-time staff.

Growing Links serves communities in St Buryan, Sennen, St Just, Pendeen, Newlyn and Hayle, providing local veg bags for delivery and collection which are supplemented by produce from local growers.



Its Street Food Project is a hot meal service that operates seven days a week, 365 days a year. This volunteer-led service was created to support Penzance’s homeless people and /or vulnerably housed, as well as families and individuals suffering from poverty. The project’s volunteers and supporters cook hearty and nutritious food nightly and use the meal service to engage with members of their community who often feel marginalised by their circumstances. Over dinner and a friendly chat they offer support and advice by linking people up to other agencies in the local community. Along with volunteers from the Growing Links Food Store they also put together shopping bags of essentials for families or individuals in need.

Its Young Food Activists project is designed for 11 to 15 year olds and is aimed at building self-confidence and increasing wellbeing in this cohort. Participants are encouraged to connect with nature and be active in the outdoor environment, to participate in growing food, cooking workshops and sharing food together in the Community Garden. The activities are supported by professionals within the community, youth workers and experienced youth project facilitators.





The Food Store was set up to supply store cupboard essentials as well as fresh vegetables to families and individuals experiencing poverty in west Cornwall. It offers a discreet, friendly and non-judgemental weekly food bag delivery for as long as help is needed, using food gleaned from local fields and collected from supermarkets, the Hive Cornwall, FareShare and other partners generating food surplus.

## D. Loveland



Loveland is part of Falmouth Food Cooperative CIC and is in Penryn. The co-op was registered in 2019 and Loveland started in 2021. Core members of the Falmouth Food Co-op saw the land available, and decided to take the opportunity as a way to contribute to its vision. An application to Truro Diocese, the landowner, outlining a community green space, was accepted in November 2020.

The first year of the project focused on community engagement and consultation to find out what was needed and most wanted by local people, and from that the aims were formed. As local people requested to develop specific projects at the field, several subgroups were formed - for example the medicinal herb garden, flowers plot and the grains pilot project.

Loveland aims to:

- Enhance wellbeing by providing an inclusive welcoming space for joy, connection to ourselves, the land and each other
- Nurture community resilience through participatory action and shared experience that benefits our local ecosystems and economies
- Produce local food, contributing to food security: raising awareness of and accessibility to healthy nutritional food
- Significantly improve the condition of the land as a space for education and learning where people of all ages and abilities can learn to grow, prepare, cook and eat delicious and nutritious food
- Encourage and increase biodiversity on the land through nature conservation and the creation of healthy ecosystems for plants and wildlife



The main activities currently comprise a community garden, an orchard, a medicinal herb garden, a market garden, heritage grain trials, a flower patch, volunteer sessions, social prescribing and community events which include feasts and a range of workshops. The site consists of 8.5 acres on a five-year farm business tenancy which ends in 2025 before moving to a rolling yearly contract with a 12-month notice period. They also have an additional 2.9 acres on a two-year lease which has recently been renewed.

Initially they had very little infrastructure but now have a small propagation polytunnel, a small greenhouse, a compost toilet, a roofed pergola built on the original cabin, a small tool shed, a roadside stall and mains water connection. Currently about 1.5 acres are under cultivation.

Through various volunteer projects, Loveland grows a variety of vegetables, fruit, cereals, and medicinal herbs. There is also a newly-planted fruit and nut orchard. The market garden is in the early stages of development and produces fruit and vegetables to supply the Falmouth Food Co-op's food hub, as well as three shops and cafes and a roadside stall.

The staff team comprises one part-time (0.6 full-time equivalent) grower and two other part-time roles engaged in communications and social prescribing. Over 450 people subscribe to the newsletter and there are over 150 volunteers throughout the year.

Loveland enjoys a very positive relationship with the local community, with local councillors, church leadership, and other community groups. Loveland's aims are well-aligned with the Diocese's net-zero and biodiversity ambitions. There is a growing connection with both Exeter and Falmouth universities which is proving fruitful as students use Loveland for their creative and /or academic projects.

The main challenges that Loveland faces are lack of capacity for the coordination and development of the project. The short-term nature of the lease means that it cannot confidently plan for the future. Reliance on grant funding means it cannot be confident about its financial sustainability and although fundraising is done by volunteers, this is reliant on them having the capacity and energy to do this work.

## E. Newquay Orchard

# NEWQUAY ORCHARD

Newquay Orchard CIC was created in 2015 and is engaged in a range of social activities aimed at improving mental health, teamwork, and education. Its community supported agriculture scheme, Grown@Newquay Community Orchard CIC, was incorporated as an independent spin-off aimed at becoming more financially independent with more land for growing.

The community orchard is a seven-acre site on land at Tretherras leased from the Duchy of Cornwall. Grown at Newquay Orchard is a community supported agriculture market garden based at a council farm in the village of Ruthvoes near St Columb. It runs as a sub-business of Newquay Orchard and generates income to allow it to continue its work in the community with education, wellbeing, and work experience.

The aims are to:

- Create the best community green space in the UK
- Empower the community to evolve Newquay Orchard to meet the needs of the people and planet while creating profit
- Use the orchard to demonstrate a replicable and financially sustainable solution for communities across the UK to help them thrive and tackle local issues that are important to them

The site aims to improve the local economy by:

- Providing jobs, apprenticeships and educational services to local residents.
- Making organic food cheap and available, reducing food miles and wastage
- Improving the health and wellbeing of residents through exercise prescription schemes, rehabilitation, and mental health services
- Creating a social hub where people from all walks of life can congregate

Grown by Newquay Orchard is a community supported agriculture scheme based at Fentenfenna Farm in Ruthvoes using agroecological principles. They currently grow on two acres with the ambition to expand to four acres in the next four years and supply 45 households by subscription, with the aim of supplying 120 households from four acres. They have three staff, two interns and about 60 volunteers (including three schools). People aged 18 to 21 can volunteer and learn to become growers through a partnership with COMPASS and Skills Your Way.



The orchard employs 36 people (22 full-time equivalent) and generates an estimated £7m economic benefit to the local community each year. Its Growing Futures project offers support to 15-24 year olds who are currently unemployed and economically inactive in the areas of education, training and employment. Their skills training covers landscaping, horticulture, food production, conservation, woodwork, digital product design, events management and hospitality and participants are offered work experience, training and coaching, curriculum vitae development and careers advice. Growing Futures is an alternative learning environment to college or sixth form and is focused on developing practical skills in an outdoor setting. Participants gain employability qualifications up to Level 2 in learning, employment and progression.



The orchard’s Sustainable Lives programme is aimed at adults who are taking a break from work or are in receipt of Universal Credit. Participants develop skills in self-sufficiency in the community wood workshop and the community grow space. They also have access to free health and wellbeing classes such as yoga and meditation, and are offered a free lunch from the community kitchen. This initiative is projected to generate a social return on investment of £7.50 to the National Health Service for every £1 spent. Newquay Orchard has also created a vibrant and thriving business community hub based in Kowel Gwenan (The Beehive).

Newquay Orchard has planted over 2000 trees and established two acres of wildflower meadow and have seen a fivefold increase in biodiversity

## F. Soul Farm



Soul Farm CIC is a four-acre market garden based on the Trefusis Estate in Flushing. It is a not-for-profit membership organisation run by volunteers and paid growers. It began growing in the 2.5 acre walled garden in 2018, and in 2021 started alley cropping between rows of apple trees in a 1.5 acre juvenile cider orchard.

Its main aims are to:

- Produce good food for as many people in the local community as possible, especially to marginalised groups, such as refugees
- Have social impact in the community
- Make the project financially viable

Soul Farm produces about 120kg of salads and leafy greens every week and a range of fast rotation crops and other seasonal vegetables, including 2000kg tomatoes. These are distributed through a subscription veg box scheme, the Food Barn farmers' market in Flushing, and wholesale distribution to restaurants in the area. The box scheme delivers to Falmouth, Truro, Ponsanooth, Mylor, Lanner, Stithians. Each distribution channel accounts for about a third of revenues.

Soul Farm has three working directors (one of whom is the farm manager), two community directors, one assistant grower, one part-time staff, one intern, a few ad-hoc staff (paid hourly) and between five and 10 volunteers a week. It has ambitions to increase the labour force with more paid roles, internships and volunteering opportunities.



Soul Farm’s subscription model for veg boxes is on a sliding scale according to household income. Members are asked to pay a rate that aligns with their income and background as a means of supporting more equitable access to fresh, local food. Food justice, agroecological principles and restoring people’s relationship with the land is at the heart of Soul Farm’s activities.

When necessary, Soul Farm supplements its veg box offering with locally-grown produce from other suppliers. It is aiming to increase production to cover the “hungry gap”, and to increase wildlife on-site by making its production more closed loop. It has previously run courses with Charles Dowding (the no-dig “guru”) and hopes to run more in the future.

Soul Farm co-founded and now runs the Food Barn in Flushing, which hosts over 20 local producers at a farmers’ market on Saturday mornings, and a makers’ market on Sunday mornings. Regular traders at the Food Barn include bakers, fishmongers, meat producers, a cheesemonger, a preserve maker, a nature-based cosmetics maker, drinks producers and florists.



## G. Tamar Grow Local



Tamar Grow Local (TGL), based in Callington, is a community interest company run on cooperative principles, incorporated in 2008. Membership comprises customers, partners, volunteers and staff. The first project was the setting up of an allotment site in Calstock. It was set up in recognition of the need for a more coordinated approach to community growing and the realisation that there were many people who wanted to start a land-based business but had no access to land. One of TGL's main aims has always been to redevelop market gardening in the Tamar Valley and creating new routes to local markets. It is not a grower in its own right but functions more as an anchor organisation facilitating the development of land-based businesses and community projects, and develops short supply chains and routes to local markets for growers and producers.

Its activities focus on three main areas:

- Community – providing opportunities and support for local people to grow their own food including allotments and community orchards
- Education – raising awareness of the benefits of local produce and the unique market gardening history of the Tamar Valley; skills development and business training for new starters in land-based enterprises; beekeeping courses
- Commercial – working with commercial growers and supply chains to increase the availability and consumption of local food and produce

Main sources of income are grant funding, consultancy and retail activity. TGL employs two full-time and six part-time staff and has volunteers across the projects.

In 2015 TGL launched the provision of starter horticultural units through a Farmstart project in the Tamar Valley, with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, UnLtd. and the Plunkett Foundation. The project is aimed at new growers wanting to access parcels of land of between half and one acre to kick-start their fruit, vegetable and flower growing businesses. TGL rents the land from a local farmer and provides training and advice, and routes to market for the produce.

The Tamar Valley Apple Co-op sources apples exclusively from small traditional orchards in the Tamar Valley. It pays a fair price for apple varieties not considered commercial by larger growers and presses and bottles the juice for sale through the Tamar Valley Food Hubs and other retail and hospitality outlets.



The Tamar Valley Honey Co-op provides low-cost equipment, a clean room for extraction, expertise and training for novice beekeepers, as well as helping producers to market their honey and bee-related products. By providing access to equipment required for extraction, and helping members to sell their honey, TGL supports the local beekeeping community and to increase the number of bees (and beekeepers) in the valley.

The Promoting our Produce project is part of the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme. TGL is leading on this project which aims to help rejuvenate the valley's market gardening industry by supporting existing and new enterprises and community groups. This includes the creation of new community allotments; specialised training and demonstration sites; a network of local food ambassadors; creation of a new apple juicing facility and promoting the food and drink that is produced in the area.

[Tamar Valley Food Hubs](#) is an online farmers market (retail and wholesale) supplying fresh, locally-produced food and drink from across the Tamar Valley every week, with collection points and local delivery to the door. They have over 60 local producers who supply the hubs. Customers have the option to sponsor a veg bag for a family in need and approximately 20 bags a week are provided in this way.



TGL is currently working with the Landworkers' Alliance and the The Apricot Centre to deliver the New Entrant Incubator Pilot, a free business-focused training programme for new entrants into agroecological farming in south-west England. This DEFRA-sponsored project is available to two cohorts of new entrant agroecological farmers with different levels of experience.

For the start-up cohort, the programme covers foundational aspects of starting and running a farm business (business planning, looking for land, getting planning consent, fundraising, forecasting and analysis, markets and cooperative networks) and is for new entrants who have at least six months training or experience in farming, land management or conservation. For the scale-up cohort (those with 10+ years experience looking to scale up) learning is focussed on expanding, diversifying income and increasing resilience within the context of changing farming landscapes.

Grow Share Cook provides opportunities for households experiencing food insecurity and care leavers to improve healthy eating and cookery skills in Plymouth. Working in partnership with Plymouth Community Homes and Plymouth City Council\_TGL supplies fortnightly bags of five different seasonal fruits and vegetables which are sourced direct from growers and community growing projects in the Tamar Valley and in Plymouth. A recipe sheet designed around the contents is included with each bag to help encourage recipients to try out new and varied meal ideas. Cookery workshops are held throughout the year.

TGL's Good Food Loop is a not-for-profit weekly distribution network connecting local food hubs and wholesale customers with agroecological producers in Devon and Cornwall. It supports small-scale agroecological producers across both counties by providing easy access to new markets, allowing producers to extend their geographical reach and increase their sales with limited additional work.

Participating food hubs and wholesale customers benefit from being part of a short, zero-waste supply chain giving them access to a wider range of locally-grown agroecological, speciality and seasonal food and drink from across the region. They also have the assurance that they are supporting good environmental practices, paying producers a fair price. The project is run in partnership with the Apricot Centre and Good Food Exeter, and received funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation in 2021.

Moreover, TGL is home to a number of other projects which in turn support these community groups and other food producing businesses including local markets, food hubs and an equipment bank. They work with other local organisations and businesses to achieve this as well as developing their own projects for sustainable production.

**Appendix 5 –  
Community growing in Cornwall: Benefits and challenges**

## Benefits

Community growing initiatives in Cornwall lead to multiple human, environmental and economic health benefits. All the interviewees highlighted that there is a strong demand for community growing in Cornwall and this is supported by the results of the Cornwall Association of Local Councils survey.

### Climate, biodiversity and environment

The Soil Association identifies three positive environmental impacts of community growing: effecting change through awareness raising and encouraging sustainable behaviour; providing food of low environmental impact; improving the local environment through land management.

Community growers are aware of the importance of locking carbon in the ground and consciously undertake a range of climate mitigation activities including planting trees, community woodlands, and using minimum-tilling farming techniques. These activities also reduce flood risk, reduce use of water and improve biodiversity.

Local food production encourages agroecological and sustainable farming practices, minimising negative environmental impacts and improving biodiversity. Community food growing largely uses nature-friendly principles within an integrated pest and disease control system that improves plant and soil health. Growing food locally and creating short supply and distribution chains reduces the carbon footprint associated with long-distance transportation and the energy-intensive processes involved in large-scale agriculture. By promoting community food growing schemes, we can reduce reliance on industrialised agriculture, which often relies on synthetic fertilisers and pesticides.

Community growers have a destination for their entire crop, which almost eliminates food waste, because they are well integrated in their locality. Buyers are better able to exercise ethical and sustainable social and environmental responsibility through their buying habits.

### Economic

Community growing schemes can have a positive economic benefit in a number of ways. They create employment opportunities for local people and maintain money in the local area through trading with other producers. For example, in 2020 Tamar Grow Local's Tamar Valley Food Hubs paid £159,000 to local growers and family businesses across the Tamar Valley, helping to keep some food businesses going throughout the pandemic and in some cases boosting sales significantly as well.

Community growers can partner more readily than commercial growers, allowing them to pool resources and assets, reducing the cost burden on individual growers. Direct or shorter supply chains reduce cost pressure on producers, so they can operate a more sustainable business model, as demonstrated by the community supported agriculture model as well as the Good Food Loop in Devon and Cornwall.

Small-scale producers close to their communities have additional routes to market, including institutional food buyers, and generally these sales are more profitable than selling through a wholesaler. (For example, the Tamar Valley Food Hubs pay producers 85p per £1). Buying food locally means supporting a diverse food economy, keeps money in the local economy and supports jobs in farming and food production.

### **Innovation**

All the case studies champion best practices and innovation in agribusiness. There is an informal collaborative network of schemes across Cornwall that share best practices and innovative, responsible, regenerative solutions that could be adopted more widely. This is evidenced by the large number of interviews that highlight the importance of being “a place where people get trained in horticultural skills” and can see the opportunity to develop formal learning centres (Newquay Orchard, Bosavern Community Farm). The schemes provide learning opportunities and also transform horticultural education and practices.

Another example of an innovative approach is the work of all the community growing schemes interviewed with the National Health Service in developing the practice of prescribing “food as medicine”. Some are also working with schools to make sure students have nutritious and balanced school meals (e.g. Newquay Orchard, Bosavern Community Farm, Tamar Grow Local).

### **Education, work experience and employment**

Many of our community growing schemes offer opportunities for education and skill development. They can serve as platforms for teaching sustainable farming practices, agroecological gardening techniques, and environmental stewardship. Through participation in community gardens, individuals, especially children, can learn about the food system, the importance of healthy eating, and the value and practice of cultivating and nurturing plants. These skills can empower individuals to make informed choices about their food and lead to increased self-sufficiency. Knowing where food comes from locally might encourage people to re-learn cooking and food preparation skills. This can also foster cooking and food preparation skills, many of which have been lost in the community. For example, some schemes share recipes and cooking tips in WhatsApp groups and weekly emails (Camel CSA, Soul Farm).

Several of the projects we studied have a track record of successfully helping local people in these ways, in some cases supporting unemployed individuals to regain self-confidence and acquire work experience (e.g. Newquay Orchard, Bosavern Community Farm). However, it is worth noting that this requires adequate capacity that not all have (Loveland). The provision of suitable support for unemployed and marginalised people requires dedicated and qualified personnel (Newquay Orchard).

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Community growing schemes provide nutritious and chemical-free food. They are often working with volunteers from areas of very high deprivation and they actively engage with these communities and their struggles. They are able to provide a range of unique benefits. These can be opportunities for semi-retired and elderly people to be and feel part of a vibrant

project or opportunities for those who suffered abuse to volunteer in a safe and supportive environment. All community growing schemes have a strong record of improving mental health and some in schools (Newquay Orchard, Tamar Grow Local, Bosavern Community Farm).

Growing food enhances both mental and physical wellbeing through exposure to nature and physical activity<sup>35</sup>. People who are engaged in local food activities, whether physically involved in the activity of growing or not have better wellbeing than non-participants.<sup>36</sup>

Evidence from mental health charity Mind's Ecomind project shows how mental health can be enhanced even after very short periods of time by access to ecotherapy. Some 70% of participants who had a diagnosed mental health condition experienced a significant improvement in their wellbeing, self-esteem was boosted by an average of 11% for 60% of participants and almost 80% saw their mood improve by 6%.<sup>37</sup>

Research has shown that for women recovering from stress, nurturing plants from seed to maturity evoked feelings of curiosity and desire to follow their progress<sup>38</sup>. Studies examining the effect of allotment gardening on stress levels found a significant decrease in levels of stress compared to those exercising indoors<sup>39</sup>. A further study found that an older cohort of allotment gardeners appreciated both the “doing” of gardening and the “being” in the garden or allotment with a range of health and wellbeing benefits<sup>40</sup>. An experiment to test the stress relieving effects of gardening compared to reading found that while both led to decreases in cortisol levels, the effects in the gardening cohort were more significant and longer lasting than those in the reading cohort.<sup>41</sup>

### **Food security**

Community food growing schemes help enhance food security by providing access to fresh, nutritious and locally-grown produce. In many communities access to healthy food options can be limited, leading to food deserts where residents lack access to affordable and nutritious food.

Schemes provide access to land and support individuals to learn the skills they need to successfully grow food. They respond to additional demand for local, healthy food in a context in which climate change and conflicts affect global supply chains (Camel CSA). In addition, some address food insecurity in the community by providing produce and meals to marginalised families and individuals (Tamar Grow Local, Loveland/Falmouth Food Co-op). In addition, shorter supply and distribution chains have the potential to be more resilient.

### **Enhanced land use**

Community growing projects frequently result in the enhancement of land facilities and improvements in land productivity through various measures, such as the development of water supply systems and the implementation of tree planting initiatives. These plantations serve multiple purposes, including acting as wind shields, enhancing habitats for wildlife and supporting soil regeneration processes. The positive impact extends beyond environmental benefits, as they contribute to increased food productivity within the community. Moreover, these improvements have the potential to raise the value of land for its owners, presenting

an additional economic advantage and a further incentive for landowners to grant land access to such initiatives.

### **Member/customer satisfaction**

Successful growing schemes across the county report high levels of member/customer satisfaction.

*Positive and supportive feedback...Lengthy waiting list - Camel CSA*

*Customers are feeling positive and receptive...Customers stay with us for quite a long time, which is a sign of approval - Soul Farm*

*Solid order numbers - Tamar Grow Local*

*Stable waiting list - Newquay Orchard*

## **Challenges**

### **Access to suitable land**

There is an acute shortage of available land for sale or rent in Cornwall that is easily accessible for community growing. Cornwall has large areas of protected landscape where planning restrictions might impede the erection of sheds, polytunnels or renewable energy technology. Land values have doubled in the last decade, even more so on the outskirts of towns and villages where there are competing pressures for land use.

Ideally community growing sites need to be highly visible, close to a centre of population and easily reached via public transport, bike or on foot rather than in a private car (Bosavern Community Farm, Camel CSA, Growing Links, Loveland, Soul Farm).

### **Security of tenure**

Short-term tenancies are another barrier to community growing schemes as they limit opportunities to invest in the organic certification process, in perennial crops, trees and hedging, and in infrastructure such as protected cropping areas and irrigation systems. Uncertainty about tenancies, lease review points, landowner intentions and other issues limit many growing schemes and have high opportunity costs. Short-term tenure (Soul Farm, Loveland) also has implications for the ability of the CG to apply for funding and plan investment. Longer-term tenure (Camel CSA, Newquay Orchard) have a remarkable comparative advantage.

Split sites make logistics and strategic development more challenging (Soul Farm is split across multiple sites; Bosavern Community Farm is frustrated by 4.5 acres in the middle of the farm that belong to Cornwall Council).

**Landowners need the right tenants**

Getting suitable tenants can be a challenge. Many people want to start a new community growing scheme but fail to convince landowners because they are ill-prepared and their proposals and business plans are inadequate. Or they have no track record and unrealistic expectations. Tamar Grow Local has experienced this with applicants for its FarmStart project. The schemes that have thrived or at least survived tend to have greater capacity to attract volunteers and organise them, have strong business plans and can count on a broad set of skills – including organisational, financial and technical (Camel CSA, Newquay Orchard, Tamar Grow Local).

**Conventional planning and land management practice**

Conventional land managers and planning policy makers often struggle to understand the viability and value of small-scale community growing. They can have a narrow and traditional focus on monetary returns that overlook the social, health and environmental benefits of community growing activities. Some landowners will only sell or rent at a commercial rate without considering the social benefits to the community. Additionally, one landowner referred to the perceived problem of land becoming “sterile” if leased out long term.

**Climate change**

Historically, Cornwall has a mild climate with high rainfall, seasonal Atlantic gales and occasional frost and snow. Climate change is causing extreme weather events including extended heat waves, drought, flooding, storms and frost that delay seasonal planting schedules, contribute to lower crop yields, lead to total crop failure, and cause damage to infrastructure e.g. polytunnels (which are unlikely to get insurance cover). Rising temperatures will also affect the viability of some native plant species and increase the threat of non-native plant pests and diseases.

**Cost of living crisis**

As households cut spending on fresh fruit and vegetables this has impacted the revenue of growing schemes that rely on sales of fresh produce for their main source of income. Some volunteers have had to pull back because they need to increase paid working hours elsewhere or even come out of retirement (Camel CSA).

**Reliance on grant funding**

Most community growing initiatives need grant funding to cover initial start-up costs and subsequent capital investment. A significant number rely heavily on grant funding to pay for staff and other core activities (Bosavern Community Farm, Loveland, Newquay Orchard). The funding landscape is complex and variable and not all community organisations have the skills or experience to access it equally.



**Scale and viability**

The imperative to grow to achieve the scale traditionally seen as essential for economic viability can cause schemes to fail, because they expand too quickly. Slow growth creates resilience, longevity and helps retain community feel, allowing stronger “anchor organisations” to emerge to support constellations of smaller schemes.

While having multiple social and environmental goals is a strength this also needs a strong commitment of resources as community growing schemes often struggle to juggle and coordinate all activities and goals.

**Skills support**

Community growing schemes are likely to be small-scale and their reliance on significant volunteer input could threaten viability. There is a need for training or support in multiple operational roles and responsibilities including agroecological and organic production, volunteer management, equality and diversity, marketing, finance and business planning as well as specialised technical assistance.

**Working hours and wages**

Staff who run growing schemes often work long hours on low wage levels without proper sick pay, adequate pensions or paid holidays. Some schemes offer “internships” in exchange for accommodation, training and a small stipend; others rely on unpaid workers from cultural exchange networks like WWOOF (Worldwide Workers On Organic Farms). While volunteering and its benefits should be encouraged, there is a fine balance between paid and unpaid work at community level that needs to be carefully handled.

**Contrary public perceptions**

There are widespread attitudes that the food grown in community growing schemes is expensive, although it normally reflects the actual cost of production. The UK population relies heavily on imported fruit (84%) and vegetables (46%) purchased in supermarkets and many consumers have scant knowledge of what fresh produce is available during the British seasons, how it’s grown, the vagaries of the weather and how it affects growing procedures.

**Government policy**

Current policy favours large conventional agricultural producers. New wide-ranging policies are needed to improve access to land for small farmers and growers and community growing schemes using agroecological and organic practices.



**Appendix 6 –  
Background, method, authorship and references**

This report was produced under the direction of Lord Robin Teverson on behalf of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board to further its 2022-23 Sustainable Growing Schemes<sup>42</sup> Priority Action under the Cornwall Plan<sup>43</sup>. A summary with recommendations was presented to the Leadership Board meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.

The impetus for the work came from an experimental event designed to engage civic and civil society organisations in a goal for action that could galvanise them to work together for a positive future. This Civic Lantern event was held in June 2022 and agreed a top goal to: “Give land and support for every community to have a sustainable growing scheme.”<sup>44</sup>

The new Sustainable Food Cornwall Partnership also prioritised community growing in 2022, and Cornwall Council’s September 2022 Turning The Tide<sup>45</sup> summit generated an Access to Food workstream to support increased community growing in Cornwall within its cost of living crisis response. This report combines these three lenses to provide an integrated overview of community growing in Cornwall, its multiple health, environmental and socioeconomic benefits and the actions required to strengthen and expand community growing in Cornwall.

From November 2022 to May 2023 the Community Growing Working Group met to discuss the practical barriers to, and opportunities for, the further development of community growing in Cornwall. As the need for a synthesis of the work became apparent, a task-and-finish group, the drafting team, was formed to produce a paper for the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board that formed the basis of this fuller report.

The people and organisations involved in the working group, drafting team and interviews that underpinned the case studies at appendix 4 are listed below:

### Community Growing Working Group

**Chair:** Lord Robin Teverson, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership

**Members:**

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Luke Berkeley, Newquay Orchard & Fentenfenna Farm  
Katie Bliss, Organic Research Centre, Cornwall Wildlife Trust & Sustainable Food Cornwall  
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Dougie Handford, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership  
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### Community growing case study interviewees

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Finn Halsall, Loveland  
Francesca Iliffe, Camel CSA  
Laurence Jarrett-Kerr, Soul Farm  
Katie Kirk, Bosavern Community Farm  
Alexandra Murphy, Loveland  
Hetty Ninnis, Newquay Orchard  
Jon Selman, Tamar Grow Local

On behalf of the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Leadership Board, Lord Robin Teverson records his sincere gratitude to all of the above for their participation and contribution to progressing the Leadership Board Priority Action.

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