



Glasgow Allotments Say

Glasgow Allotment Strategy 2016 - 2020 Consultation Outcomes Report

Pidgin Perfect for Land & Environmental
Services, Glasgow City Council





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Introduction

Glasgow Allotment Strategy

Glasgow City Council, Land & Environmental Services are required to produce an Allotment Strategy to manage, develop and promote allotment gardens. An integral part of this process is the consultation: designing a questionnaire for wider distribution to clarify community aspirations which will become fundamental themes within this strategy.

The participatory process will consist of separate but linked direct contact events alongside a questionnaire issued to a wider demographic of allotment growers within Glasgow.

Consultation Plan

As Land and Environmental Services develop the new allotment strategy for the next five year period, they commissioned Pidgin Perfect to independently engage communities, using their expertise to capture the ideas, visions and values of allotment gardeners in Glasgow.

Representatives from each Allotment Associations for a Glasgow City Council allotment site and Glasgow Allotment Forum were invited to take part in the three interlinked elements of the consultation programme to allow participation at the earliest opportunity in the process of drafting the new strategy.

Each of the events for the Allotment Consultation will share an approach to engaging citizens and groups in the future of allotments and growing spaces. Pidgin Perfect propose developing an open toolkit which will empower individuals in Glasgow to share their ideas, visions and values about the future of growing spaces, allotments and community gardens.

Workshop Toolkit Overview

Knowledge

- A toolkit of resources;
- Helping individuals and organisations to share their knowledge about growing communities;
- Helping uncover citizen information.

Community Workshop

- Based on the well-tested model developed by Pidgin Perfect since our inception;
- Combining activities which explore, gather data and allow for learning and relationship building.

Event

- Sessions aimed at a wide range of participants;
- Focussing on uncovering stories and local knowledge;
- Uncovering aims, visions and values within growing communities.

Wider Engagement

- Use of online and hard copy questionnaires to gather wider audience opinion;
- Creating consensus on the future of growing spaces in the city.

Engagement Event #1

The first consultation event was an enjoyable evening which allowed for frank and open debate in a friendly and respectful manner.

The outcomes informed the on-going consultative process and future direction of travel for the allotment strategy. All those involved in the inaugural stage were invited to share their understanding of how the process for a new strategy would unfold with fellow association members, as a precursor to the issuing of a questionnaire and invitation to the second engagement event.

The aim of the first event was to capture an understanding of the relationships people have with their allotment; all that these relationships entail; and how those present see that relationship developing to inform the next stages of the consultation process.

Plot Holders & Waiting List Questionnaires

Glasgow City Council and Pidgin Perfect used the outcomes of Engagement Event #1 to develop the direction and questions for the *Glasgow Allotments*



Questionnaire which was issued to plot holders and those on waiting lists for Glasgow City Council allotment sites.

To allow this to be a truly inclusive consultation process, GCC and Pidgin Perfect asked Allotment Associations to provide contact information for all those on waiting lists.

Engagement Event #2

The second engagement event was designed as a fully interactive consultation day, held at the city chambers, for up to 300 participants. During this event we worked with those present to explore, in detail, five key themes which had been highlighted by Engagement Event #1 and the questionnaire returns. In this way the participatory process was iterative and responsive to participants needs and opinions.

Engagement Reporting

This report brings together the outcomes of these three consultation elements, correlating the captured information from the events alongside information extracted from questionnaire to assist in forming the direction of the Allotment Strategy.

Within this report are the common themes, including quotes and comments from participants; collated information, opinions, views and ideas; and, engagement statistics.

Pidgin Perfect has drawn out what allotments mean to those working one and those on waiting lists alongside recommendations for the next Glasgow Allotment Strategy and a brief for continuing engagement and communication between Glasgow City Council and the growing communities of Glasgow.

Engagement Statistics

Throughout the Glasgow Allotments Strategy engagement programme Pidgin Perfect gathered information from participants which has been anonymised to provide the following statistics. The following diagrams demonstrate the breadth and inclusion of the programme and prove the validity of the outcomes drawn from responses.



2

Engagement and Information Gathering Events



2

Questionnaires, 1 each for plot holders & those on waiting lists



5

Month engagement programme



21

Glasgow City Council Allotment Sites



372

Total number of participants in the engagement programme, over the two events and questionnaires



1000s

of opinions, ideas & responses

Participant Gender Split

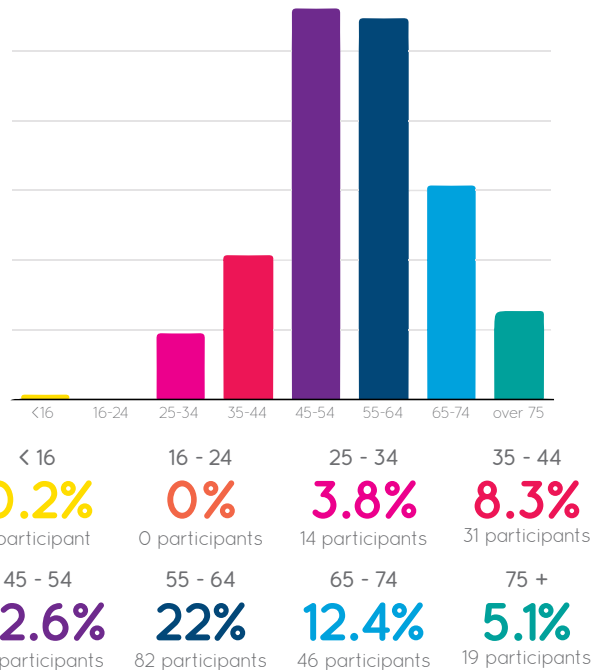


Male: 49%

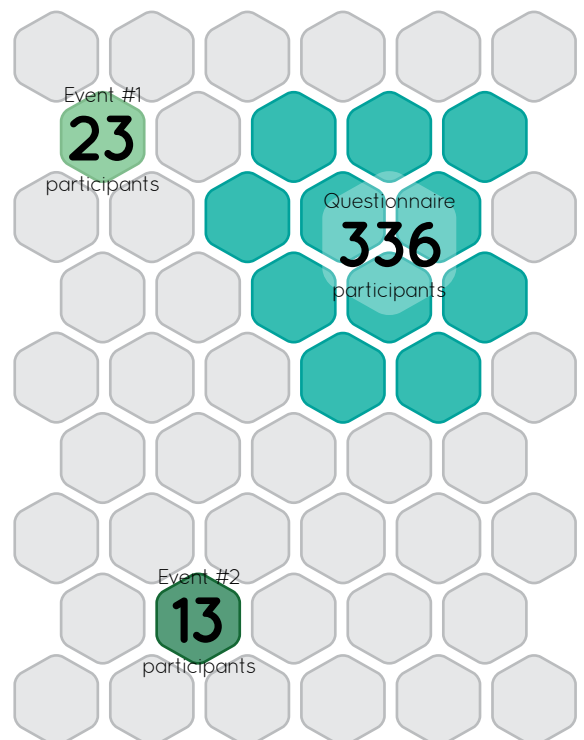


Female: 51%

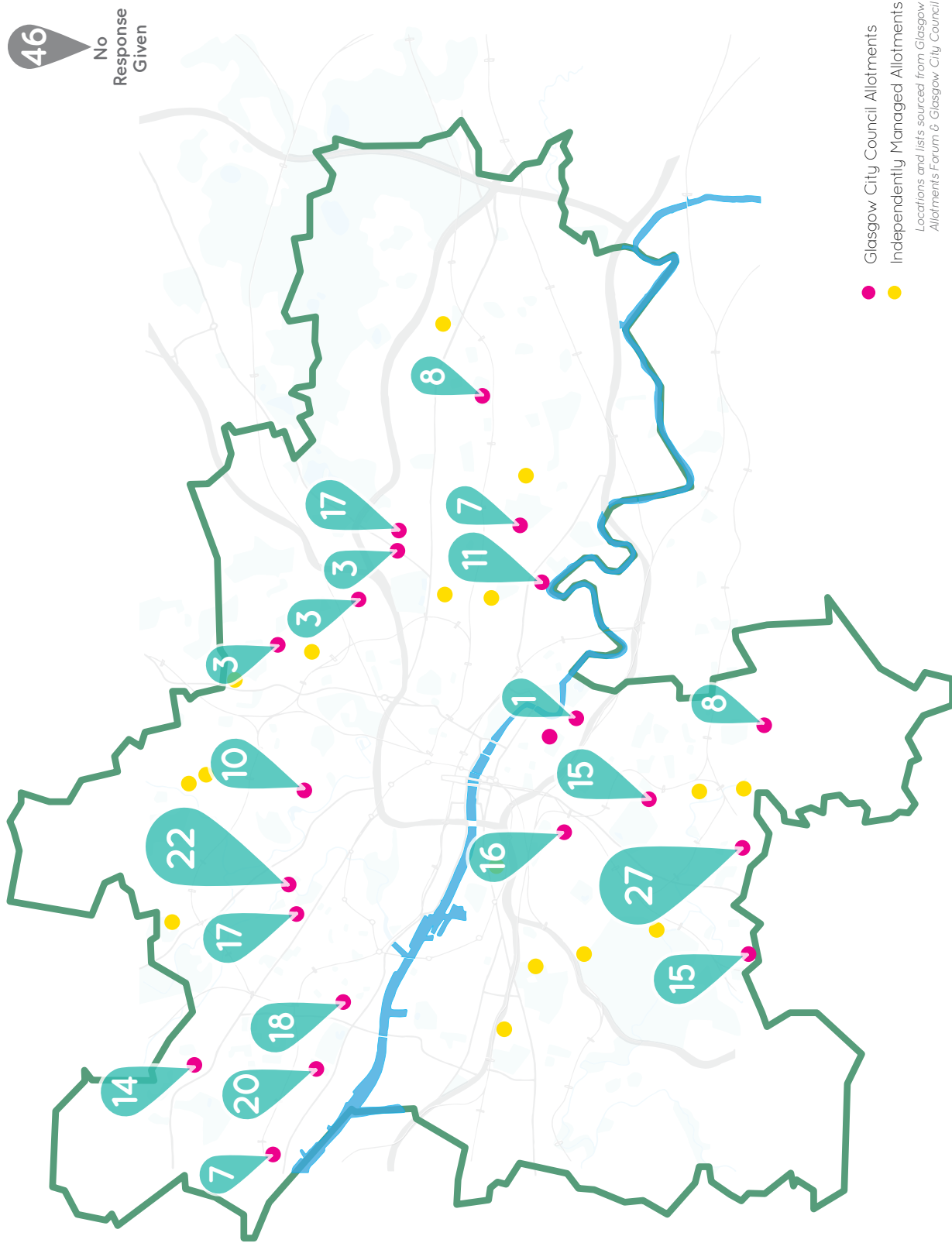
Participant Age Range

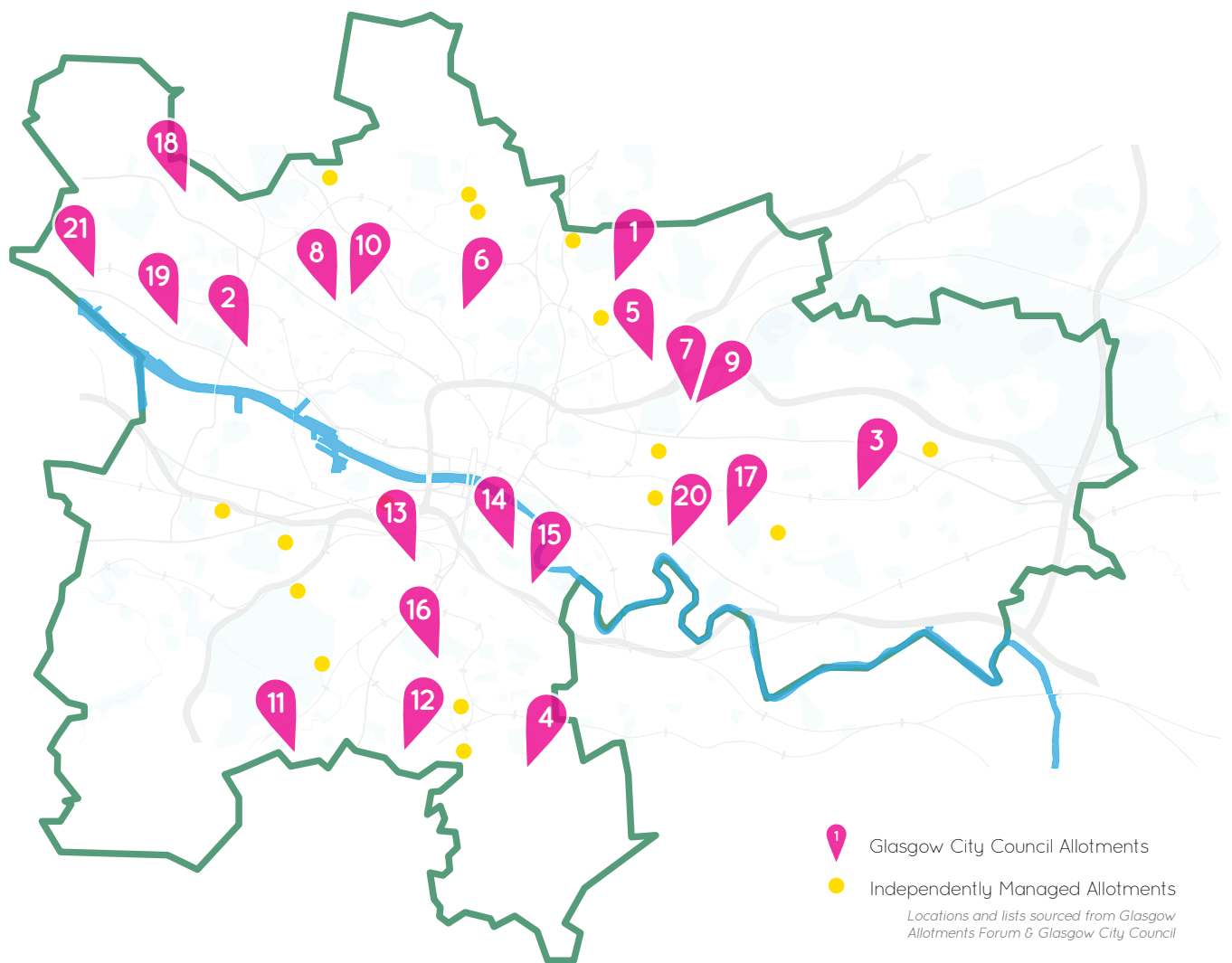


Engagement Participants



There are 1500 people registered at the twenty-one Glasgow City Council Allotment Sites
1 hexagon = 30 people





Within Glasgow there are a number of allotment sites in addition to other growing opportunities, including community gardens which were not involved in this consultation programme.

The map above shows the twenty-one Glasgow City Council managed allotment sites alongside eleven

independently managed allotment sites in the city.

During the engagement programme, council managed sites were invited to Event #1 and their plottolders and waiting lists were sent questionnaires. Event #2 was a publicly accessible event which was shared through Allotment Associations & social media.

Glasgow City Council

1	Balornock Community Allotments	8	Julian Avenue Allotments	15	Oatlands Leisure Gardens
2	Beechwood Allotments	9	Kennyhill Community Allotments	16	Queen's Park Allotments
3	Budhill & Springboig Allotments	10	Kirklee Allotments	17	Tollcross Park Allotments
4	Croftburn Allotments	11	Mansewood Allotments	18	Trinley Brae
5	Germiston Allotments	12	Merrylee Allotments	19	Victoria Park Allotments
6	Hamiltonhill Allotments	13	New Victoria Allotments	20	Westhorn Allotments
7	High Carnyntyne Allotments	14	Oatlands Gate Allotments	21	Yoker Allotments

Independent

Balmore Allotments, Bellahouston Allotments, Bellahouston Walled Garden, Berridale Allotments, Dennistoun Allotments, Garscube Allotments, Holmlea Allotments, Kinning Park Complex, Lambhill Stables, Petershill Allotments, Reidvale Community Allotments, Shettleston Allotments & Community Growing Project, Sir John Maxwell Gardens, South Western Allotments, Springburn Allotments



Engagement Event 1

Information Gathering Event

23 Participants invited from Allotment Associations
& Glasgow Allotments Forum

3 Representatives from Land & Environmental Services
(LES) at Glasgow City Council

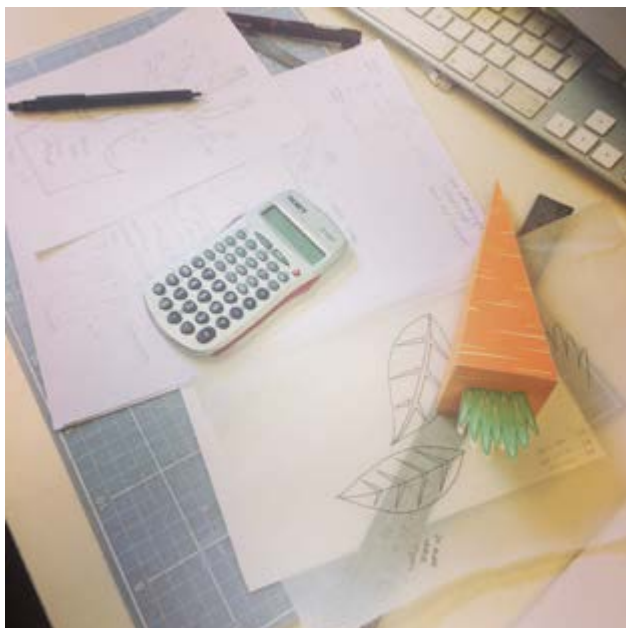
3 Facilitators from Pidgin Perfect

This event was run as a facilitated discussion to gather information from the initial participants to capture information and ideas, gather stories and begin to get an idea of allotment holders aims, objectives and ideas for the future of allotments within Glasgow.

The outcomes of Engagement Event #1 were used to develop questions and the direction of the Questionnaire for both plot holders and those on waiting lists.

Toolkit Development

Pidgin Perfect developed a number of tools which would be used throughout the first workshop to gather information and ideas both as individuals and together at the first engagement event.



Developing the toolkit & 'Carrot Boxes'



'Story Planters' & 'Visioning Tree' set up for Event #1

Toolkit Elements:

Allotment Postcards & 'My Favourite Vegetable'
Once Upon An Allotment & Carrot Planters
'Story Planters' for Allotments NOW and FUTURE
VISIONING Trees
(Please see Appendix 1 for further information.)

Event Outline

Introduction

Pidgin Perfect and LES introduced the project, why we had gathered there and outlining the process for the evening.

My Favourite Vegetable!

In one minute facilitators asked people to draw their favourite vegetable and think about why it is the best. Each participant then shared the following three things:

Their name

Their favourite vegetable

Why it's the best vegetable in 3 words

Buried Stories. Once upon an Allotment...

Pidgin Perfect asked participants to think about their allotment, their connection to allotments and any stories about the growing. In fifteen minutes participants wrote short stories about their allotment. Participants worked individually, with support from facilitators as required.

Once these were completed they were folded and placed into their own 'Carrot Box' which was then buried in the 'Carrot Planter'.

Allotments NOW

Participants were split three groups, each with a representative of LES and a leading facilitator. Over the next twenty-five minutes each group discussed and investigated their feelings, opinions and ideas about allotments as they are now. This revolved around the following questions:

My favourite thing about....
My least favourite thing about....
I use my allotment for....
I enjoy.... about allotments
I think my allotment is....

We used postcards, speech and thought bubbles (with and without prompts) to gather answers and record discussions about allotments now and the responses to these questions. Responses were attached to each group's 'Story Planter' and recorded photographically before the next activity.

VISIONING Allotments

In groups we continued to investigate the visioning of allotments for the future. We used a facilitation method we call "sevens" - asking the group to individually pick seven words / images that for them sum up what allotments could be. These sevens will gradually be whittled down and group consensus reached for the key seven words and images which outline their ideals for the future of allotments. Blank cards were provided to add new words / images as the group decides.

We used the visioning words and images to gather answers and record discussions about participants' visions for allotments in the future.

Responses were attached to the 'Visioning Tree' and recorded photographically before the next activity.

Allotments in the FUTURE

For the final twenty-five minute activity each group will investigate their feelings, opinions and ideas about allotments as they are now responding to questions similar to those below:

Wouldn't it be nice if...
I think allotments would benefit from...
I wish I could... at my allotment

We used postcards, speech and thought bubbles (with and without prompts) to gather answers and record discussions about allotments now and the responses to these questions. Responses were attached to each group's 'Story Planter' and recorded photographically before the next activity.

Round Up

During the round up the facilitators asked participants for any last minute ideas, opinions or stories that they think were missed during the discussions to round up the event.



'Story Planter' in use at Event #1

Engagement Event #1

Selected Imagery & Workshop Output



Information Gathering Outcomes

The outcomes from Event #1 were photographed and recorded both in situ and at the Pidgin Perfect studio. Below are collated responses from the three activities: Allotments Now, Visioning Allotments & Allotment Futures. For the full list of responses from Event #1 please see Appendix 1.

Allotments Now

Considering allotments as they are now, celebrating what works and identifying what does not.



I enjoy ... at my allotment

“re-engaging with nature and eating my produce”

“having the time and experience to develop”

“I enjoy challenging myself”

10% Growing Produce

20% Connect to Nature

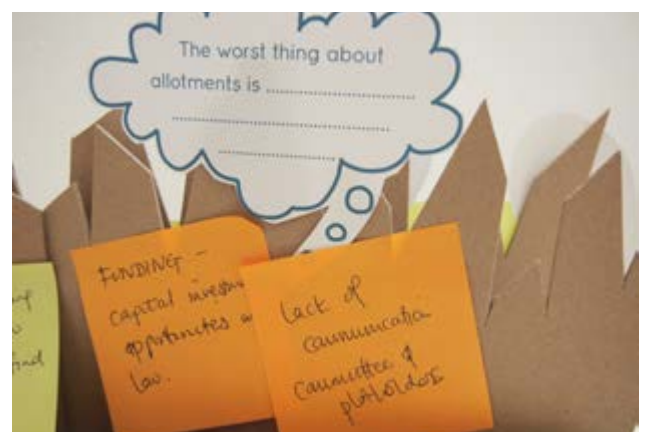
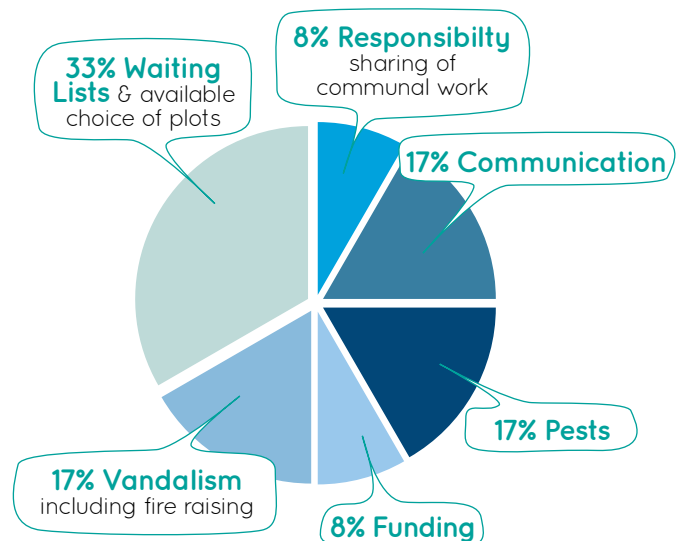
30% Lifelong Learning

40% Experiences & Challenges

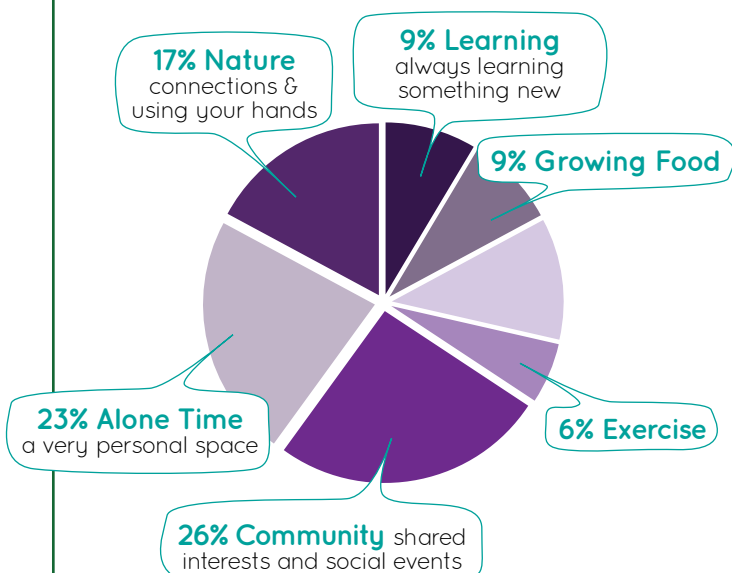
The worst thing about allotments is ...

“the way waiting lists are managed; we should get people involved from when they sign up to a waiting list”

“funding: capital investment opportunities are low”



The best thing about allotments is ...



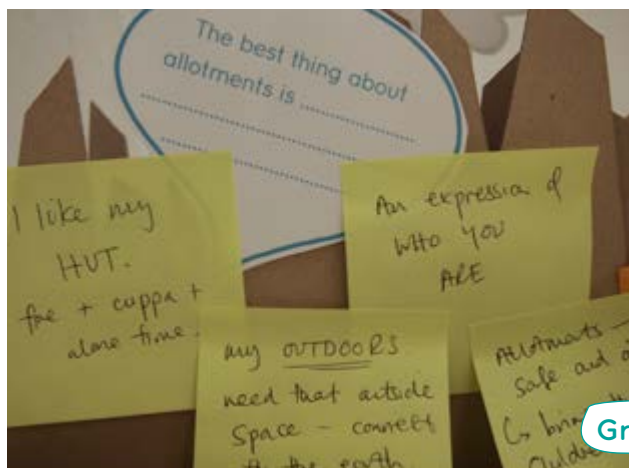
“the psychological reward and growing produce”

“positive and good source of exercise”

“camaraderie and shared interests”

“a place to be: a place to live”

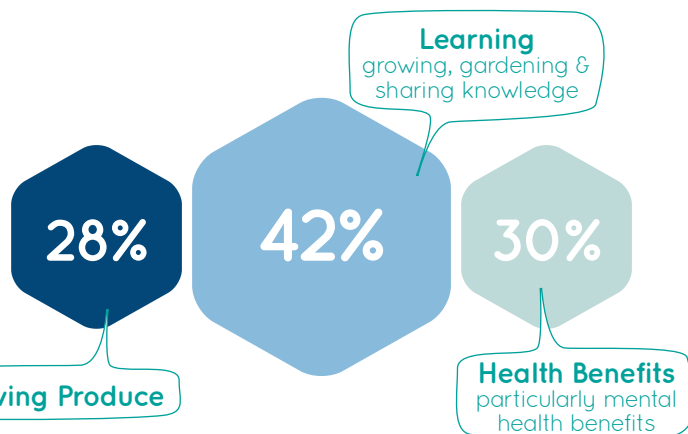
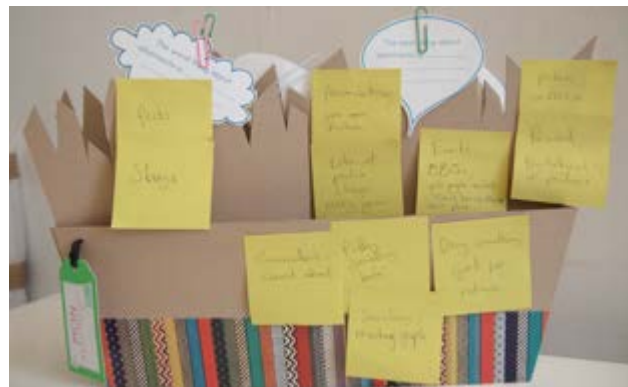
“the experience: working the soil & continuing the good work; borrowing soil from nature”



I use my allotment for ...

“I use mine for therapy, it's a bit like going back to childhood”

“growing anything; easy to grow, difficult to find outside the garden”



Visioning Allotments

Considering participants group and individual visions, aims and objectives for allotments and allotment associations as we move towards the development of the new strategy.

“we need equality and inclusivity of all community members, allotments are just ground until people look after them. We need a variety of people in the community”

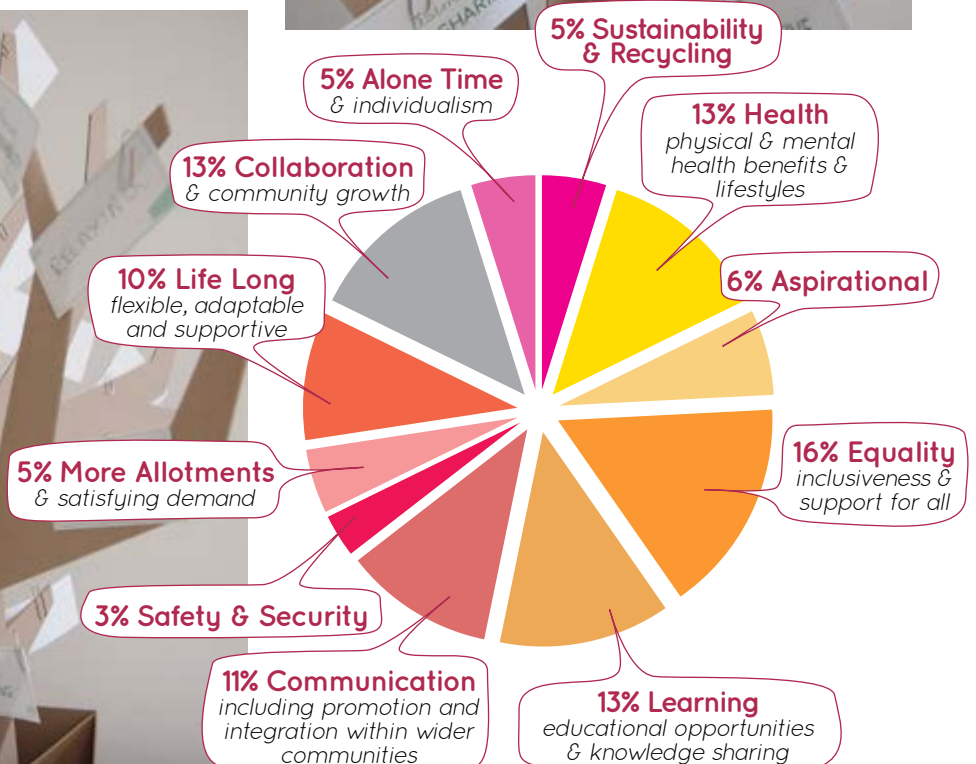
“disabled access, toilets (for everyone) and facilities at every allotment site”

“placing the allotment at the heart of the community”

“skill sharing between allotments”

“we should start with younger people, make it [allotments] part of the curriculum”

“connections to hospitals and schools”



“we should aspire to be more than the sum of us [ploholders]; more than we [allotment associations] currently are”

Allotment Futures

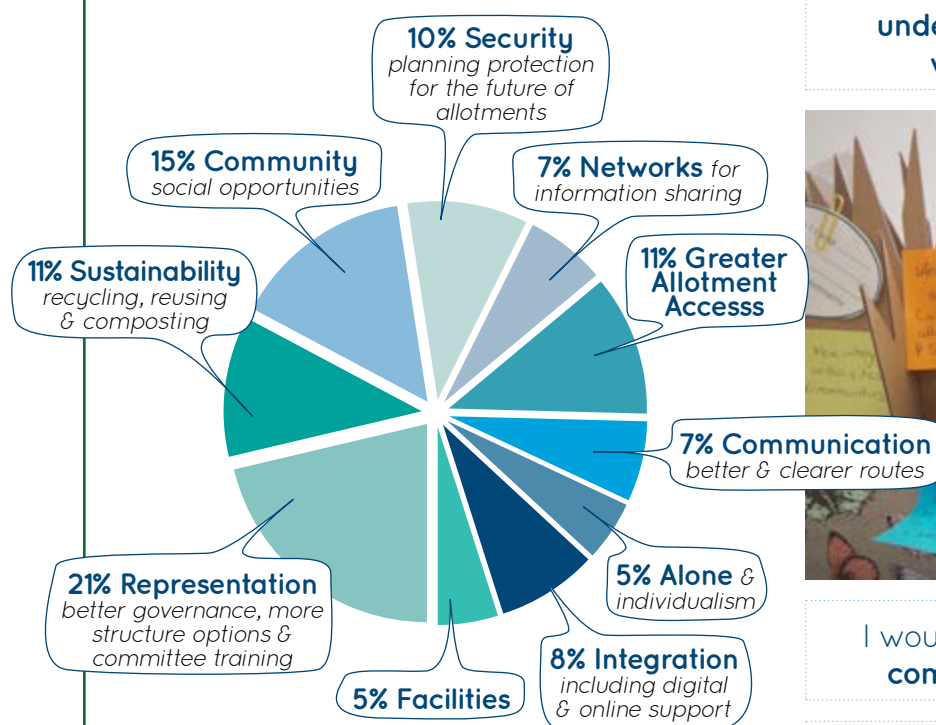
Having understood our visions from the previous exercise the groups explored how these could become sustainable future scenarios for allotments, plotholders and associations. Responses were gathered based on a number of questions:

Wouldn't it be nice if...

I think allotments would benefit from...

I would like to see...

these responses have been collated together to give an overall view of where participants would like to focus allotment development in the future.



I think allotments would benefit from... **“more information sharing between sites”**

I wish I could... **“be selectively social; options for communal as well as individual engagement”**

Wouldn't it be nice if... **“there was clearer communication instead of over communication”**

I would like to see... **“a lifecycle of ‘allotmenters’, a variety of sizes available”**

I think allotments would benefit from... **“an awareness and responsibility for the children visiting allotments”**

I would like... **“there to be opportunities for the community to be involved in, or simply be ‘in’ the allotment gardens”**

Wouldn't it be nice if... **“there was a better understanding of rules and guidelines within allotment communities”**



I would like to see... **“allotments in every community within walking distance”**

I think allotments would benefit from... **“recycling / composting; connections with GCC to reduce waste; using allotments to be smarter about recycling and reuse”**

Wouldn't it be nice if... **“there were enough allotments for the people who want them or another provision provided”**

I would like... **“more options for governance”**

Key Outcomes for Development of Questionnaire

The first engagement event involved only a small sample of plot holders, but it allowed us to gather a lot of detailed information about the way allotments are used, how they are managed and where the problems on site currently lie. The information gathered at this event informed what aspects of allotment life were covered in the questionnaire and how each topic is approached.

It was clear from the participant's responses how important allotments are to individual plotholders, but also the role they could and do play as part of a wider community. Participants spoke passionately about the importance of promoting inclusivity within allotments and their potential for accommodating a diverse and vibrant growing community.

Allotments Now

The event began by looking at the current relationship plot holders have with their allotments. It was clear that allotments brought people an immense amount of pleasure and they benefitted in ways far beyond the physical outcomes of growing and gardening. In the questionnaire, this topic was explored through gathering not only quantitative data about current allotment ownership, but also looking at more subjective views, asking people to describe what aspects of allotment holding they cherished.

Allotment Management

Numerous participants felt that communication in and around allotments could be improved across the board - with reference to both Allotment Associations, Glasgow Allotments Forum and Glasgow City Council. Participants were keen to see more information sharing across all of the city's allotments. There was also some call for a change in the current patterns of allotment governance.

Allotment Strategy

During the discussion, several participants raised the

previous Allotment Strategy produced by Glasgow City Council. They felt that it was worth exploring what aspects of the strategy had been successful and what issues still needed further investment and support to be resolved. This was important to include in the questionnaire as it was felt that little analysis had been done on the successes and failures of the previous strategy.

Allotment Visions

Participants were keen to discuss their hopes and ambitions for what allotments might be in the future and how they could be improved. Again, the majority of the responses were imaginative and subjective, but also personal and insightful. This was reflected in the questionnaire, which was designed to encourage people to share as many of their thoughts and ideas as possible, rather than having a 'tick-box' approach.



Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed to capture a wide range of responses, ideas and opinions that would build on the themes uncovered during the Information Gathering Event.

Two questionnaires were developed, one for plotholders and one for people on waiting lists at Glasgow City Council managed allotment sites.

Plotholder Questionnaire

The plotholder questionnaire covered the following:

Allotments Now

This section aimed at gathering views on allotments at they are experienced currently to provide a baseline for more indepth explorations. We asked participants to outline their favourite and least favourite things, how they used their allotment, the opportunities provided and improvements that could be made to allotment sites.

Allotment Management

In this section, we asked participants to consider how the current management and governance of allotments affects them and their experience of allotment gardening. We asked participants to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the association model and suggest improvements, as well as exploring communication models across different sites.

Allotment Strategy

In order to understand whether the previous Glasgow Allotment Strategy has been successful in reaching allotment gardeners across the city, this section asks participants to rate the success and comment on the six key commitments from the previous strategy.

Allotment Visions

The final part of the questionnaire asked participants to share their ideas, aspirations, visions and values for the future of Glasgow's allotments, their "wouldn't it be nice if...?" statements. They were asked to be

imaginative or realistic and as positive or negative as they wished.

Allotment Stories

As with Event #1 the gathering of qualitative data through stories and memories of allotments was deemed to be important. These stories prove the social value and community importance of these spaces within our city.

Waiting List Questionnaire

The waiting list questionnaire included:

Allotments Now

Allotment Visions

& Allotment Stories

The shorter questionnaire was sent to those on waiting lists at each of the Glasgow City Council allotment sites and gathered their opinions on their wishes and ideas for a future allotment, the management of waiting lists, and opinions on the availability and demand for allotment gardens.

Responses

The questionnaire was sent out by Glasgow City Council to their database of 1500 plotholders and waiting lists on Monday 29th June, with returns due Friday 17th July. We received, 267 Plotholder Returns, and 65 Waiting List Returns. Totalling:

**332 Questionnaire Responses, and a
22.13 % return on questionnaires**

Responses to the questions are laid out over the following pages. For full copies of the questionnaires please see Appendix 2.

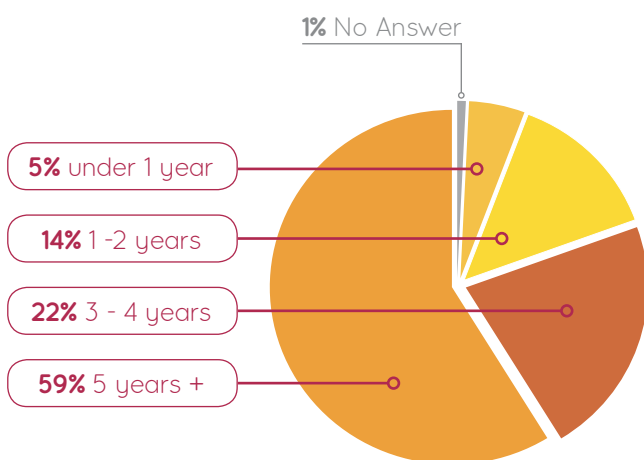
Plotholder Questionnaire

Outcomes

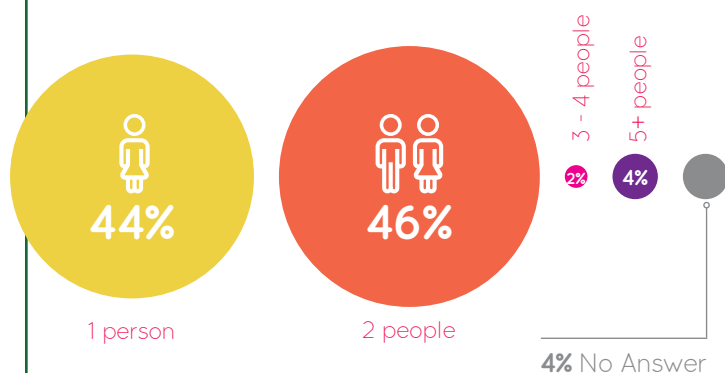
Allotments Now

Considering allotments as they are now, celebrating what works and identifying what does not.

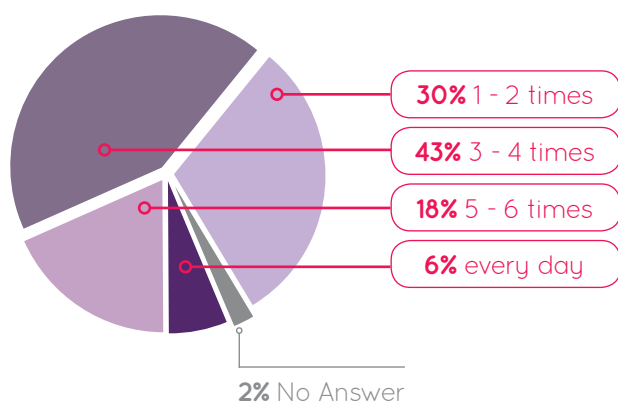
1. How long have you had your plot?



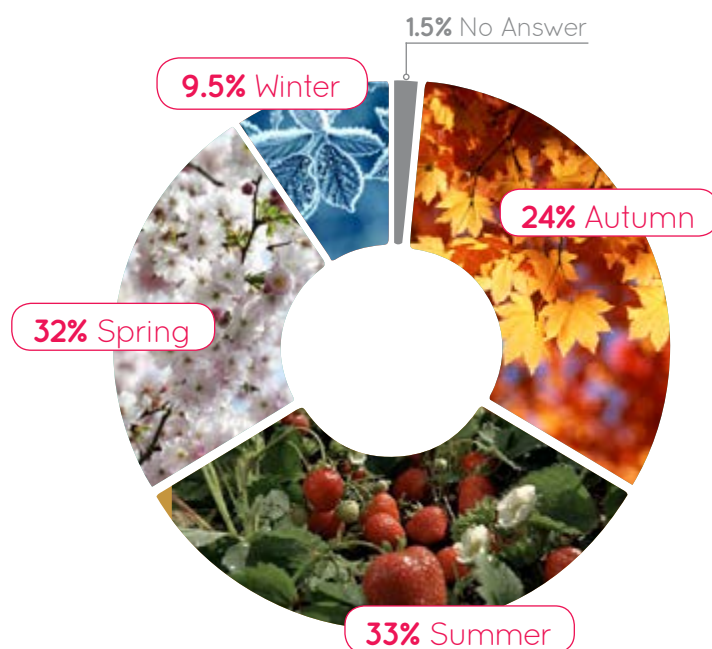
2. How many people use your plot?



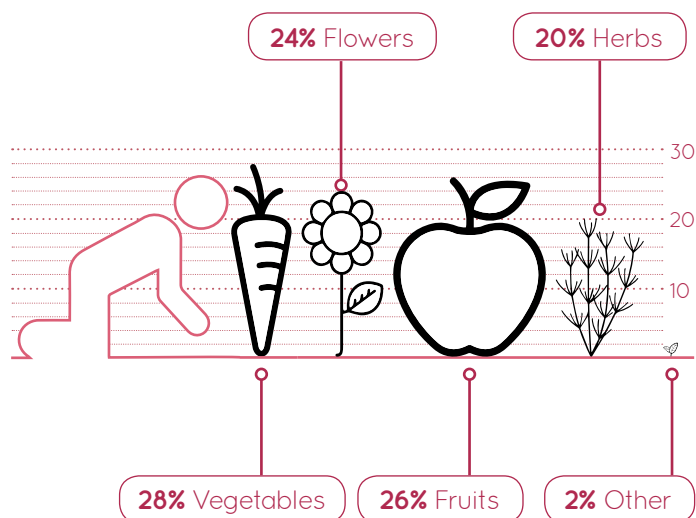
3. How often do you use your allotment?



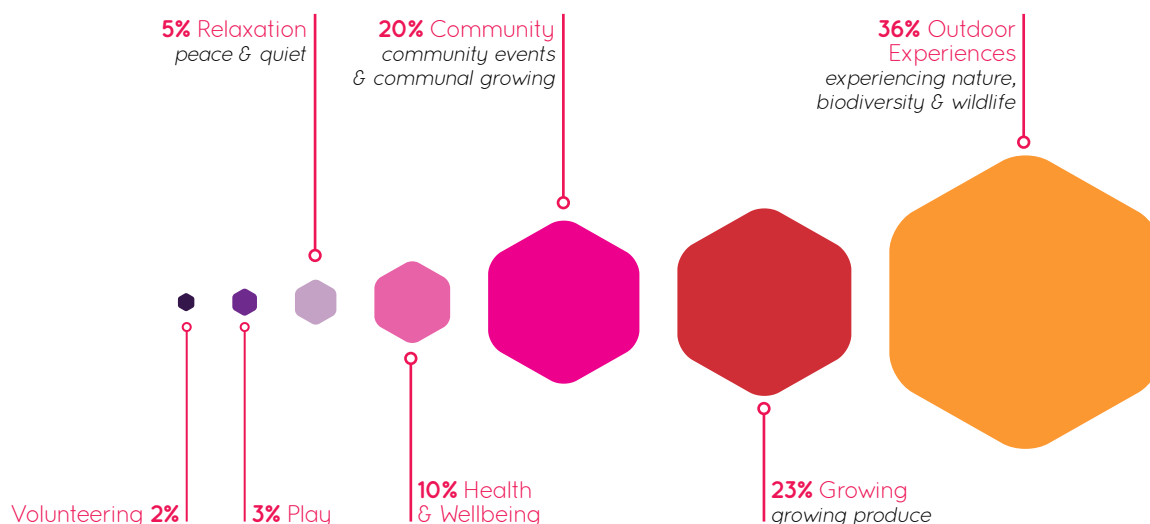
4. Which season do you most enjoy at your allotment?



5. What do you currently grow on your plot?



6. I use my allotment for . . .



7. The best thing about my allotment is...

1. Peace and quiet
2. Outdoor Space
3. Growing & eating fresh produce

For most plot holders, the main advantage of having an allotment is having space outside which offers a chance for peace and tranquillity within the city. People also wrote a lot about the enjoyment of growing your own produce and being able to share this with friends and family.

“picking fresh peas from the pod with my kids, sitting on my bench in the sun having a cup of tea after a morning digging.”

“as a flat dweller, having my own outside space”

“that I can see a change every time I visit, not just because of the work I do but because of the seasons...”

“the opportunity to be outside using my hands and appreciating nature - and eating the produce!”

8. The worst thing about my allotment is...

1. Weeds
2. Slugs
3. Weather

For almost all plot holders, the worst aspect of having an allotment is the weeds! Although slugs, pigeons and the Scottish weather also got several mentions.

“Having to carry weeds back home”

“bureaucracy of Committee”

“Scottish weather”

9. Is your plot your only garden or outside space?

43% Yes

54% No

3% No Answer

10. What opportunities do allotments offer to wider communities?

1. Connections with schools & communities
2. Environmental benefits for the whole city
3. Communal and personal experiences
4. Learning about growing and where food comes from

“mixing with people from different backgrounds - all are equal at allotments”

“I think they are a really important part of communities as they bring people together to grow and share experiences”

“provides a green oasis in urban areas”

“the opportunity to meet other parts of local community you might not otherwise meet”

11. What improvements could be made?

1. Greater availability
2. Toilets
3. Access to manure and compost
4. Improved Security

“more of them - I waited seven years for mine”

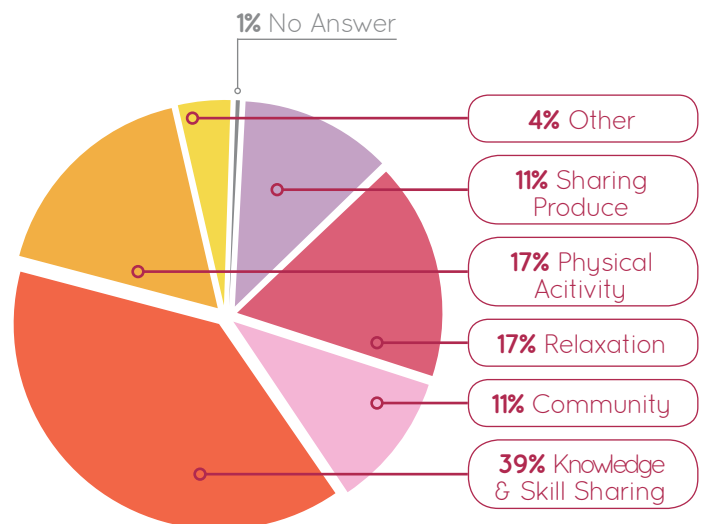
“more support from the committee when you first get an allotment”

“infrastructural support and facilities, including toilets, water and pathways ”

12. What plot size do you have?



13. Other than produce what are the other personal benefits of having a plot?



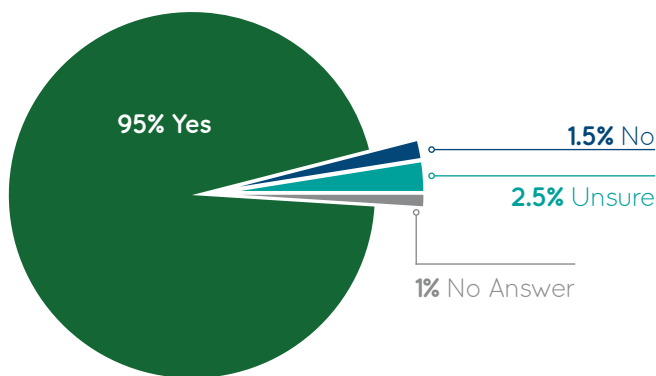
Key other benefits highlighted were:

Friendship and the other social aspects of allotment gardening. Health and wellbeing generally, with particular note to the mental health benefits of growing and being outside in fresh air.

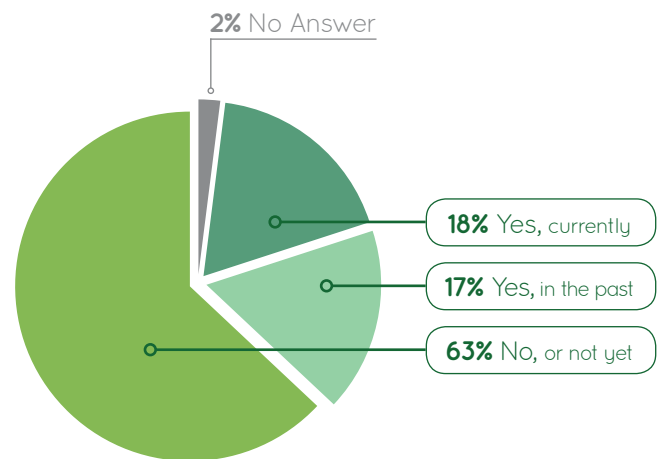
Allotments Management

Considering how current allotment management affects plotholders. What is managed well? What needs improvement? and, how needed changes can be achieved.

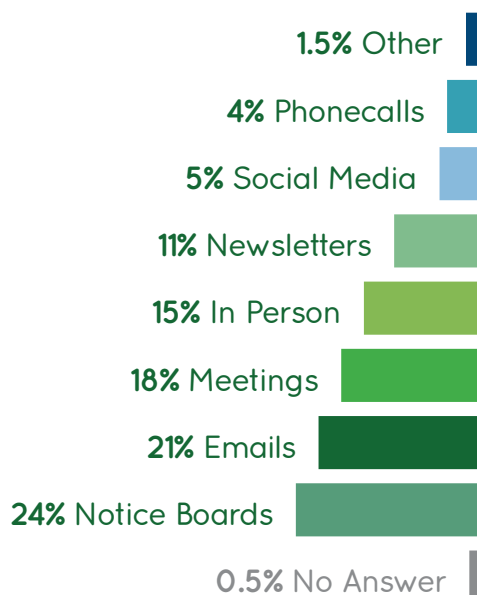
14. Are you aware that your allotment site is governed by an allotment association?



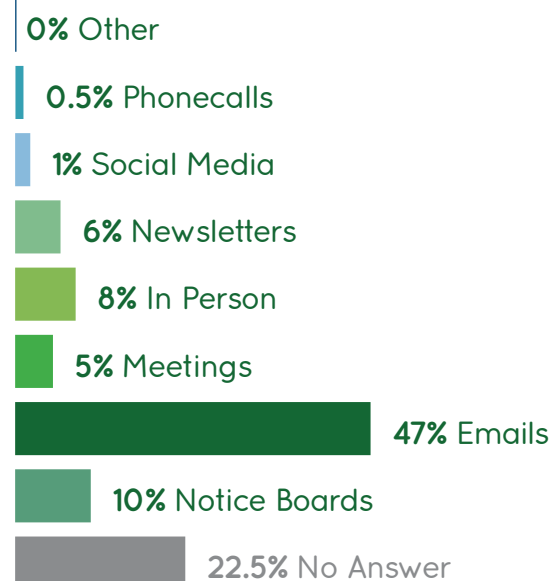
15. Are you, or have you ever been as member of your allotment committee?



16. How does your association communicate with plot holders?



17. Which of these methods is your preferred method of communication?



18. What do you think of your Allotment Association?

There is a considerable range of opinion on the efficacy of Allotment Associations displayed in the questionnaire responses.

“it seems to be quite efficient and supportive and functions well”

“A group of self-serving egotists. rules are for enforcing on others but often aren’t required to be followed by committee members”

A majority of participants understand the voluntary nature of the committee and that committee members are doing their best with minimal budgets and limited time.

“committed, hard working & trying to do their best”

However there was some concern that committees could become insular, over zealous with regulations and restrict plotholders. Waiting lists and plot allocations were a major sticking point, with mentions that the current system could be open to some abuse.

“they do a good job inspecting plots, reacting to & solving problems... I’m conscious that they are volunteers, however they could be more proactive: consider - tool hire for new plotters, encouraging work parties for tasks to benefit everyone, organising more social events to encourage existing plotters to share skills, courses for new plotters to teach them how to manage their plots”

year to year change in the committee can lead to inconsistency of goals/aims. valued commitment of members. business can get overly taken up by inter-personal disputes

“quite disorganised & although well meaning sometimes actions speak louder than words... need to be pro-active to promote the fact there are numerous empty plots for rent, our allotments have a neglected air”

“I am glad the committee is there and I help out when I can. Major incidents or social problems on site have not been effectively dealt with in the past but I suspect this is due to a lack of clear guidelines in how to deal with anti-social behaviour. This should be set up regionally if not nationally”

“overall, they do a good job. There is a lack of understanding of the work done by the committee... and a lack of personal support for the committee in general. The reason for this is unclear though”

“they do a difficult job very well, balancing the need to keep up standards with personal situations”

“it’s a vital part of keeping everything together, supporting gardens and maintaining the site. Like all voluntary organisations, they can be haphazard and it is hard to get volunteers for some tasks, there seems to be a lot more beaurcracy now... people are generally committed to maintaining the institution”

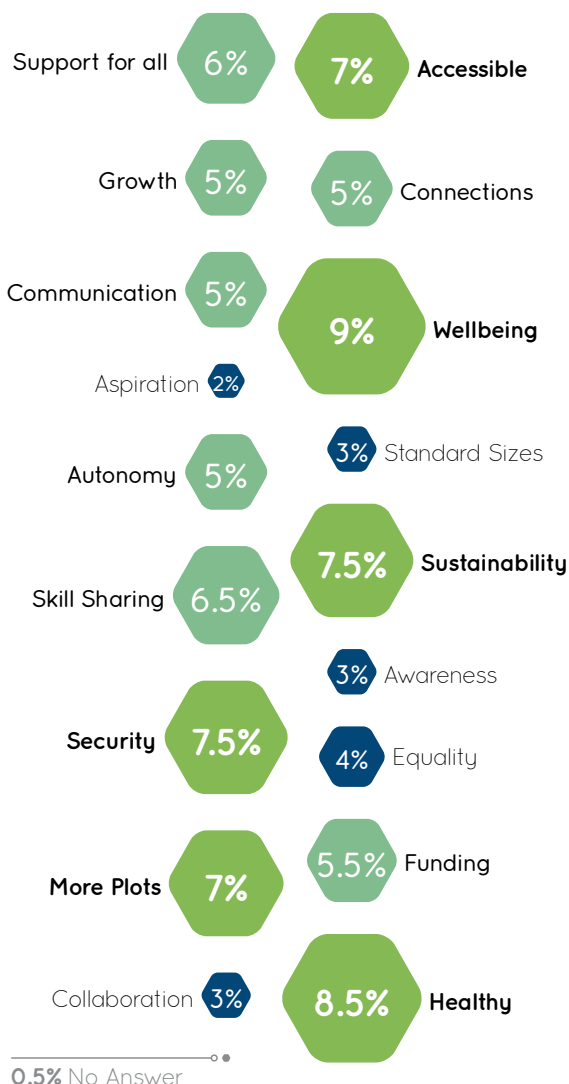
There were many comments that celebrated Allotment Associations work with community development, their support of plot holders and development of skills networks within and between allotments. It is clear that some associations are fulfilling their goals more successfully than others and that greater training and support would be appreciated by plotholders and committees alike.

19. Pick the 10 words most important to you...

We asked people to rate the words the phrases in order of their importance, with 1 being the least and 10 being the most important. Based on the responses the top 10 are as follows:

1. Standard Sizes
2. Support for all
3. Security
4. Communication
5. Skill Sharing
6. Accessible
7. Sustainability
8. Healthy
9. Wellbeing
10. More plots

Overall selections:



Allotments Strategy

Considering the current strategy, how it has been communicated to plotholders and the successes and failures of the strategy.

20. Are you aware of the existing Glasgow Allotments Strategy?

47% Yes

No 3%

50% No Answer

21. Have you read the existing Glasgow Allotments Strategy?

23.5% Yes

69% No

7.5% No Answer

22. Please consider the following key commitments from the Glasgow Allotment Strategy 2009 - 2013. Which have been successful? Where could improvements be made?

Commitment 1:
Improve Allotment Sites

Needs Improvement

OK

Successful

No Answer

15.5%

14%

2%

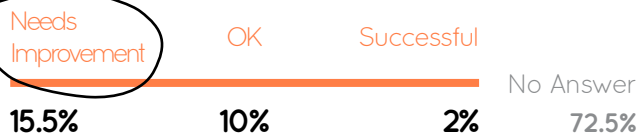
68.5%

Comments:

“emphasis should be on safety and cooperation with local police”

“given the resources available and level of demand, I think progress has been remarkable”

Commitment 2 :
Source Sustainable Funding



Comments:

“funding is minimal”

“allotment champions sounds like a good idea”

Commitment 3 :
Form Partnerships to Benefit Allotments

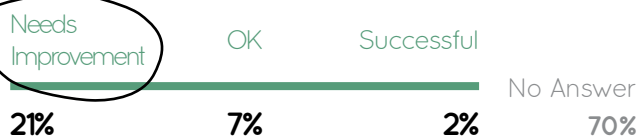


Comments:

“plot holders go to their allotments for peace and quiet, [forcing] partnerships could cause upheaval and discord”

“each association should appoint a network and partnership liaison officer on committee”

Commitment 4 :
Increase Allotment Availability



Comments:

“wonder if all association are managing their waiting lists properly”

“connections with universities, schools & community groups could be built upon”

Commitment 5 :
Develop Allotments to their Full Potential



Comments:

“am aware of some increase in inclusion: e.g. raised beds / special needs group garden, but could do more.”

“new sites needed with good sized plots”

“turn vacant land into growing spaces”

Commitment 6 :
Prioritise Biodiversity, Sustainability & Recycling



Comments:

“you cant have biodiversity without a wide range of plants (& even some weeds). People are pressured into having ‘perfect’ plots in order not to be chucked out to make room for someone else on a long waiting list”

“more could be done around recycling and sustainable infrastructure”

Allotment Visions

Gathering ideas, aspirations, visions and values for the future of Glasgow's allotments.

23. Wouldn't it be nice if... ?

Participant's responses ranged from the personal and specific for their allotment / association to wider goals for a growing culture across the city. Many wished for more plots, better facilities and more support and training available to them; networks for sharing and awareness were also requested.

"there was a central waiting list for all sites, the present system isn't working"

"there was a regular pick-up service for recycling"

"allotments were better equipped with facilities: toilets, communal spaces. We could use solar panels on shed roofs to raise money for the allotment association"

"there was more awareness"

"people communicated better"

"allotments were part of a network of growing spaces across the city that provided access, encouragement and opportunity for more people to grow"

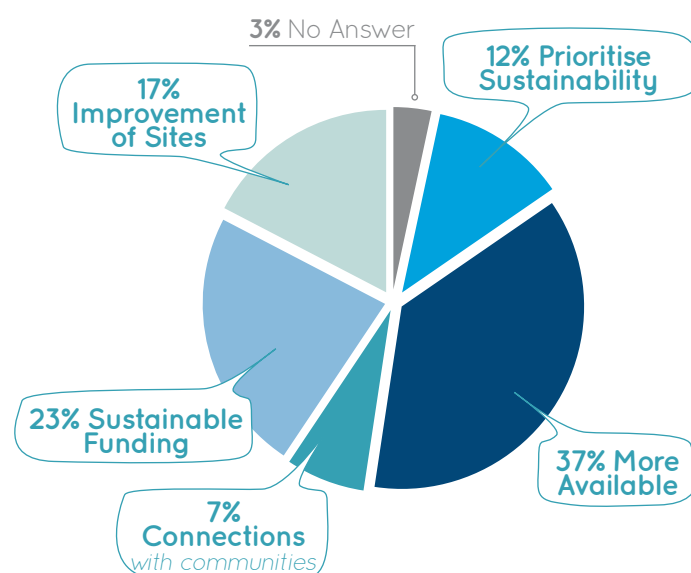
"the present freedom was continued"

"all allotments were friendly and flexible"

"brown field sites were earmarked as new allotment developments, community orchards & outdoor classrooms to encourage engagement through education"

"all the empty and rubbish-strewn waste areas could be transformed into growing spaces for people to enjoy: relaxing, growing & meeting each other"

24. I think allotments would benefit from....



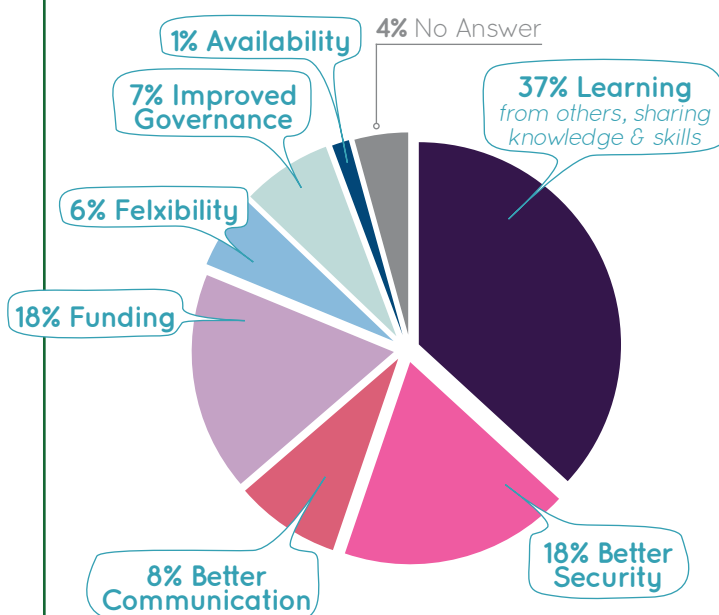
25. I wish I could ... at my allotment

A majority of the responses covered four basic themes:

1. **Security & Maintenance** - toilets, communal facilities, secure perimeter fencing, accessible paths, ongoing support for maintenance.
2. **Livestock** - bees & chicken feature primarily, although hedgehogs, butterflies and earthworms also get a mention.
3. **Supporting Sustainability** - through biodiverse 'wild' spaces, the use of solar panels for electricity and hot water, easy disposal of recyclable material and composting.
4. **More & Less** - more time for the allotment, less weeds, fewer pests, better weather.

“get green waste collected from the site which is hard to compost on a small scale”
“improve soil quality quickly”
“get to go round other allotments and see what they do, share our skills and knowledge”
“keep chickens and bees”
“have started with a clear allotment site, rubble and glass free”
“not only grow fruit & veg but also have a sustainable wildlife / wildflower section”
“spend more time there and grow more”
“feel safe and secure, even when alone”
“I love my allotment, it’s an amazing resource”

26. What could help allotments?



Allotment Wishlist

1 | Support & Training

trained gardeners / support workers available for all plot holders across Glasgow to help learn how and what to grow, how to get the most from their plots

2 | Better Facilities for All

paths, toilets, water, electricity, communal spaces for each allotment

3 | Manure & Compost

delivered on site for all the use equally

4 | Healthy Communities

connections to communities to raise personal and community health through growing and understanding food

5 | More Availability

more plots and variety, including starter plots for new gardeners. Full size plots should remain the priority though

6 | Community

“just be nice to each other”, eliminate conflict, sharing communal tasks, encouragement to bring people together

7 | Diversity

promoting equality, inclusiveness and accessibility across allotment gardens

8 | Governance

support associations through training and direct contact with GCC. A clear set of rules & regulations across the whole city

9 | Funding & Affordability

sustainable funding, rents maintained at an affordable level

10 | Sustainability

recycling, organic growing, ban (or at least lower) pesticide use, support for keeping bees & chickens

Key Outcomes for Development of Public Event from Plot Holder Questionnaire Response

The questionnaire reached a wide range of participants and captured varied, thoughtful responses. It was designed to collect quantitative data as well as giving people the opportunity to share more creative and personal suggestions for the future of allotments.

From the analysis of the questionnaire returns, it was possible to identify five key themes which participants felt should be given priority when writing the strategy for the future of Glasgow's allotments.

Sustainability

It was evident from the responses that plotholders felt strongly that allotments should be used to promote sustainability, both within allotment sites and across the city as a whole. Key points which were raised were:

- Recycling and waste management**
- Organic, low-pesticide growing**
- Support for keeping livestock**
- Celebrating biodiversity through ponds and wild flower areas**

Facilities and Access for All

The questionnaire was particularly useful for identifying, on a practical level, which aspects of allotments need to be improved and what additional facilities plotholders would like to see at their sites. It is obvious that each site has its own successes and faults so the following comments have been generalised from the range of opinions received. The questionnaire also highlighted an appetite for shared and communal facilities as well as improved access to facilities for those groups currently under represented in the growing community. This theme also looked at the matter of fees and affordability, with allotment rents differing across the city. Key areas for improvement included:

- Toilets and communal facilities**
- Hutting and structures**
- Electricity and heating**
- Safety and security on site for vulnerable groups**

Greater Availability

It was clear from the responses, both from plotholders and those on the waiting list, that there may not be enough plots available to meet demand across the city. Even those currently with a plot raised it as an issue, keen for others to experience the same growing joy that they did; and married to an irritation towards plotholders who did not work their plots or dedicate time to them. Under this theme, the aim was to explore alternative ways of addressing the issue, including:

- Shared, starter and temporary plots**
- The use of a centralised waiting list**
- How far people would be willing to travel**

Communication and Networks

The questionnaire revealed the importance of the social aspect of having an allotment to plotholders - the informal support network it generates, on both a horticultural and a personal level. The responses also showed a real appetite for widening these connections beyond individual allotment sites and creating more opportunities for city-wide training and support, as well as wishing to strengthen connections with the communities surrounding each site:

- Training from horticultural experts**
- Allotment mentoring for new plotholders**
- Tours of other allotments and Open Days**
- A Glasgow wide allotment network**

Representation

The majority of participants seem to understand and respect that the committee is voluntary and working with limited time and funds. However, there was a lot of concern that the current system of governance is open to abuse and rule and regulations are not always enforced appropriately. A number of points were raised for debate:

- Standardised rules and regulations**
- Accountability of committee members**
- Alternative methods of governance**
- Independent plot inspectors**
- Training for committee members**

Waiting List Questionnaire

Outcomes

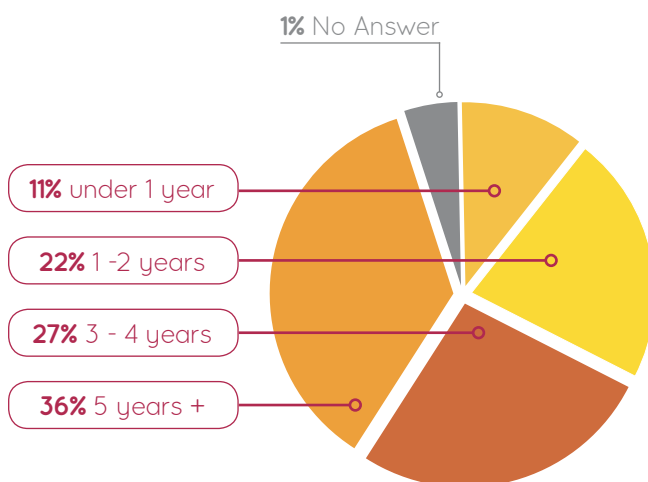
Allotments Now

Considering allotments as they are now, celebrating what works and identifying what does not.

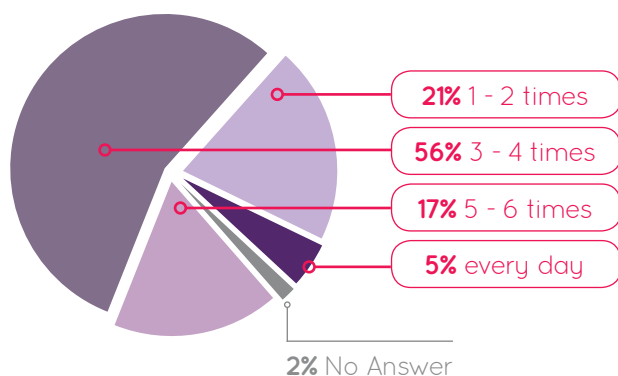
1. Have you ever held an allotment before?

22% Yes 78% No

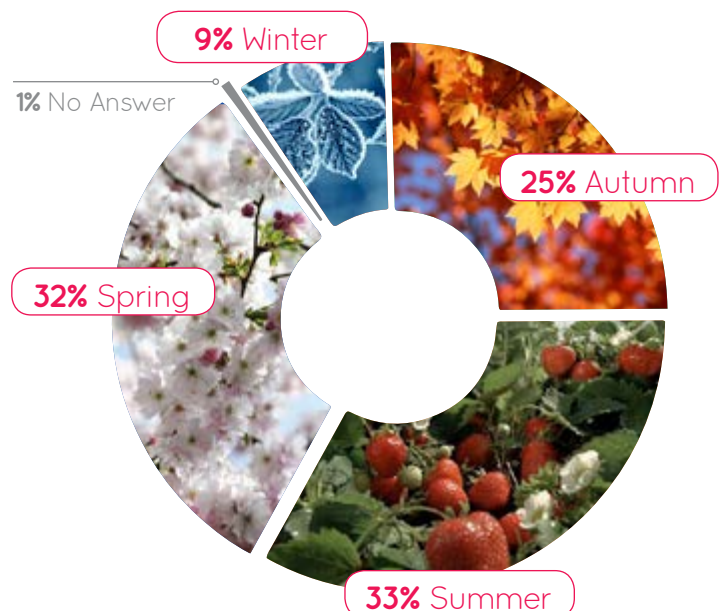
2. How long you been on a waiting list?



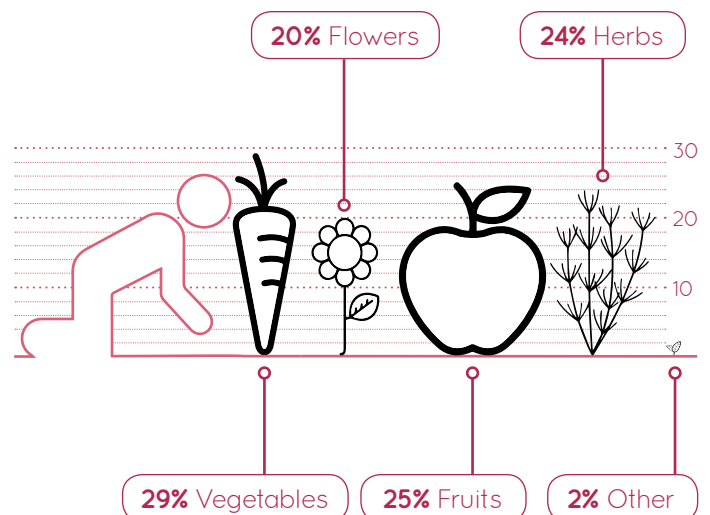
3. How often would you use your allotment?



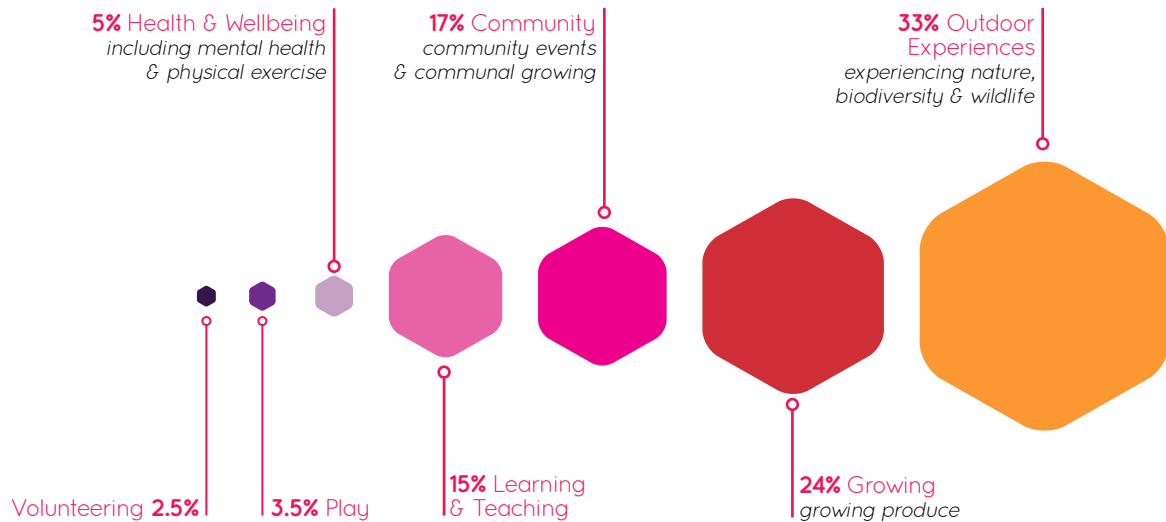
4. Which season do you think you will most enjoy at your allotment?



5. What would you grow on your plot?



6. I would use my allotment for . . .



7. I would like an allotment because...

1. Growing & eating fresh produce
2. Outdoor Space
3. Being in touch with nature

Most people on the waiting list were looking forward to having an allotment so that they could grow their own produce and share this with friends and family. People also wrote about the importance of having an outdoor space and being able to enjoy fresh air while living in the city.

“I would like to get back to nature and it is a healthy environment to be in - fresh air and exercise.”

“I love being in the city, but I miss having contact with nature”

“we want to be more self sufficient, to compost and generally be more environmentally friendly.”

“it would be an ideal way to spend time outdoors regularly with my daughter”

8. I think having an allotment would be...

1. Good for health and wellbeing
2. A good way to meet people
3. Very rewarding

The majority of people on the waiting list thought that having an allotment would be beneficial to both their physical and mental wellbeing.

“fantastically rewarding”

“allow me to be healthy, socially engaged”

“awesome. hard work, but worthwhile!”

9. Would your plot your only garden or outside space?

43% Yes

54% No

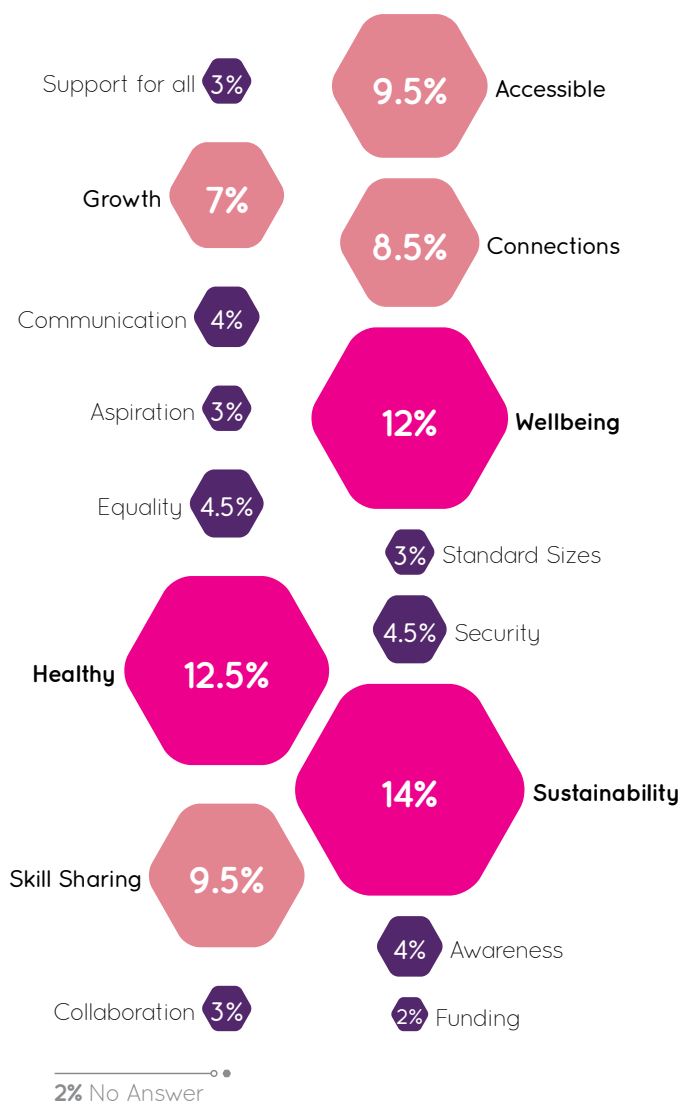
3% No Answer

10. Pick the 7 words most important to you...

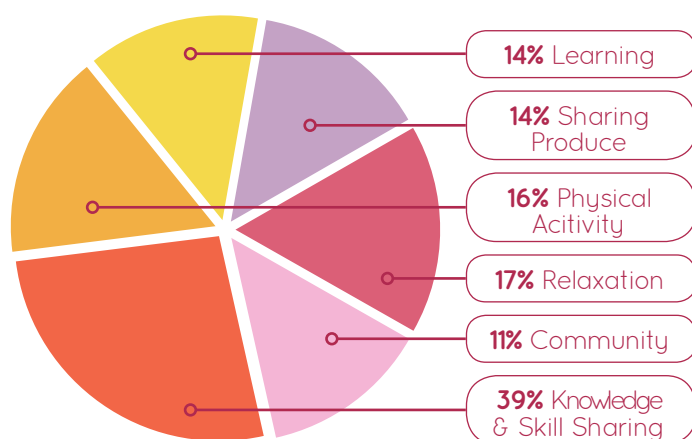
We asked people to rate the words the phrases in order of their importance, with 1 being the least and 7 being the most important. Based on the responses the top 7 are as follows:

1. Accessible
2. Connections
3. Growth
4. Skills Sharing
5. Healthy
6. Sustainability
7. Wellbeing

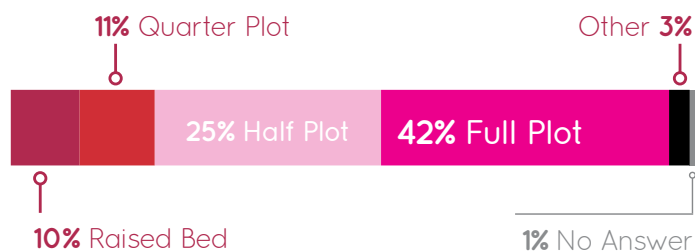
Overall selections:



11. Other than produce what are the other personal benefits of having a plot?



12. What plot size are you interested in?



Allotment Visions

Gathering ideas, aspirations, visions and values for the future of Glasgow's allotments.

23. Wouldn't it be nice if... ?

Participant's responses spoke mostly about the lack of availability and the extensive waiting list. People also spoke about the advantages allotments could offer wider communities, particularly elderly people and people with disabilities. Sharing plots, smaller plots and 'just for now' plots were suggested.

"if elderly or disabled people could have a small, manageable plot"

"young people shared plots with older people"

"through allotments people could share their knowledge of gardening, improving the health of the local community and bringing us closer to nature"

"everyone could have an outdoor space"

"waiting time was less than a year"

"more people were involved in allotments - this would help with community life immensely and combat loneliness crime"

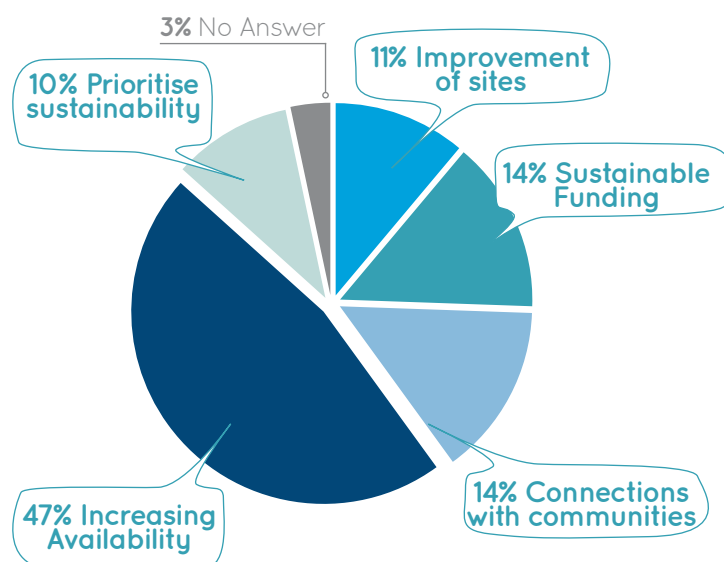
"plots were available to all those who wanted"

"there was 'starter' allotments"

"everyone who lived in a block of flats grew colourful flowers at their windows - glasgow would be a brighter, more fragrant place"

"every street had its own allotment- younger people could help older people and people with disabilities lead a healthy lifestyle, sharing recipes for homemade soup"

24. I think allotments would benefit from....



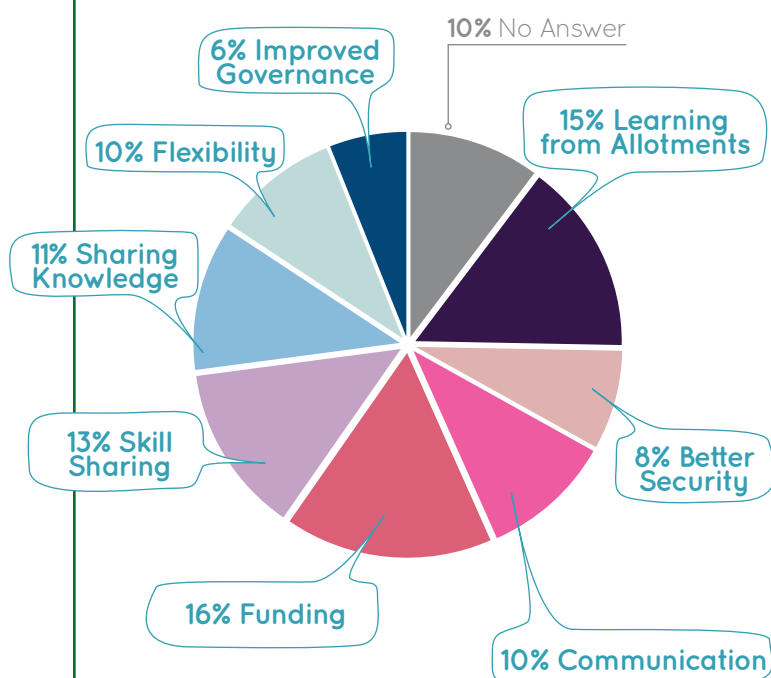
25. I wish I could ... at my allotment

A majority of the responses covered four basic themes:

1. **Getting Started** - most participants just wanted to move up the waiting list more quickly, get an allotment and get started.
2. **Produce & Livestock** - lots of participants were looking forward to enjoying fresh fruit and veggies as well as the possibility of keeping bees and chickens.
3. **Learning & Skills Sharing** - for people on the waiting list, the chance to learn more about gardening from others is a priority.
4. **Contribute to the Community** - for those on the waiting list, the prospect of contributing the community, both within the allotments and wider, is exciting.

- “create and sustain a community growing space”
- “get my allotment and get started”
- “learn about growing and planting and be taught by an expert”
- “grow my own veggies and herbs”
- “spend my days engrossed in my plot, contributing to the garden community”
- “grow traditional vegetables and introduce other growers to something different”
- “pick some strawberries”
- “eat food I have grown”
- “move up the waiting list quicker”

26. What could help allotments?



Allotment Wishlist

1 | Support & Training

trained gardeners / allotment mentors to help new plot holders as they first begin to garden

2 | Availability

increase availability of allotments in order to lessen current waiting list time

3 | Fresh Produce

to have the space and the skills in order to grow fresh fruit and vegetables

4 | Proximity

allotments which are close by or within walking distance of the plot holder's home

5 | Community

using allotments as a way of meeting people, learning from others and sharing skills and expertise

6 | Facilities for all

having access to communal tools, sheds, greenhouses and poly-tunnels in each allotment

7 | Sustainability

promoting wildlife within allotment gardens, greater use of organic gardening techniques, recycling and composting

Key Outcomes for Development of Public Event from Waiting List Questionnaire Response

The Waiting List Questionnaire gathered a range of responses from people who are currently on the waiting list for an allotment in Glasgow. The participants enthusiasm for growing and frustration at not being able to get started was clearly evident. The responses painted a picture of people's hopes for their allotments once they begin growing. These hopes reflected the same five key themes identified by the plot holder questionnaire responses.

Sustainability

Sustainability at allotment sites was of equal importance to both current plotholders and those on the waiting list. Those with experience of keeping an allotment were more concerned with the practicalities of sustainability on site - such as recycling, waste disposal and composting, participants from the waiting list questionnaire, however, were more concerned with **allotments benefitting the sustainability of all communities as part of a more liveable city**.

Facilities and Access for All

Unable to talk about specific issues with facilities on-site at allotments, many participants spoke about a desire for **communal and shared assets**, such as power tools, green houses and poly tunnels.

Greater Availability

Obviously the topic of availability featured heavily in the responses from those currently on the waiting list. Participants were all keen to get a plot and get started growing as quickly as possible. However, among the responses, a number of people voiced concern about not having sufficient gardening knowledge prior to getting an allotment. They felt that **shared, starter or just-for-now plots** would be a good way of gaining familiarity with allotment gardening and growing confidence. However, the majority of respondents still wished to eventually to cultivate a full-size plot.

Communication and Networks

Many people currently on the waiting list have **little or no previous gardening experience**. As such, there was a high demand amongst the responses for training opportunities and mentorship programmes. Participants were looking for someone to be on hand to answer questions when they first take over an allotment, not to help with the physical labour, but to provide guidance.

Those on the waiting list also placed a greater emphasis on the **community benefits of allotments** - both within the allotment site and beyond. They wanted to see more inclusivity around growing. Provision of shared or smaller allotments for those less physically able was raised numerous times.

Representation

Representation was a less pertinent issue for those not currently members of an allotment association. However, participants were looking for **a certain level of support** when they first took on an allotment, and many felt that this should come from their Allotment Association.



Engagement Event 2

Information Gathering Event

13 Participants invited from all questionnaire participants, both plot holders and waiting list.

3 Representatives from Land & Environmental Services (LES) at Glasgow City Council

5 Facilitators from Pidgin Perfect

This event was run as five facilitated activities, each designed to cover one of the five key themes identified from the questionnaire responses and Engagement Event #1. The workshop activities were designed to gather a range of ideas for tackling the issues raised by both plot holders and people on the waiting list.

The outcomes of Engagement Event #2 were used to solidify the key topics identified through the questionnaire responses as well as the main issues within them. The suggestions participants made for the improvement of the allotments also fed into the recommendations listed in this report.

Toolkit Development

Pidgin Perfect developed a number of tools for each



Printed maps for Greater Availability



'Story Planters' & printed question for Facilities & Access

of the five workshop activities to gather information and ideas. As the event was designed initially for up to 300 participants, the activities were kept simple and straightforward so that minimal direct facilitation would be required. A number of the tasks were designed to be carried out in pairs, to encourage participants to mingle and to account for those with limited literacy as would be required.

Toolkit Elements:

Sustainability

Key questions around sustainable growing with Visioning Trees

Facilities and Access for All

Key questions around access and facilities with Story Planters

Greater Availability

Allotments Map
Map Markers
Prompt Questions
'Allotment Age' cards

Communication and Networks

Postcards for discussion

Representation

Postcards for discussion

Event Outline

Participants Arrive

The participants were served tea, coffee and biscuits while they waited for everyone to arrive. During this period everyone was asked to complete a postcard detailing their Name, Age, and Allotment Association.

Introduction

Pidgin Perfect and LES introduced the project, the purpose of the participant's contribution and outlining the process for the day.

Speed Meeting

Participants were asked to get into pairs with someone whom they did not already know. They then had to 'Interview' one another using the questions on the postcards distributed earlier as a prompt. The questions were as follows:

The three best things about my allotment are...

Three things I would like to change about my allotment are...

Or

Three things I am most looking forward to doing at my allotment are...

Three worries I have about taking on an allotment are...

(participants on the waiting list)

The participants were then asked to divide themselves into smaller groups and introduce their new 'friend' to the rest of the group.

There were five workshop activities run across the day, with each one focusing on a different key theme. Participants moved around the activities in small groups, giving everyone a chance to contribute to each of the workshops. Each workshop lasted half an hour, with a focus on recording information and ideas through the participants writing down their thoughts and then feeding back to the wider group.

Sustainability

The participants were asked three questions about sustainability in their allotments. They were asked to write their answers onto a post-it note and then stick them to the visioning tree. Participants were then asked to share and discuss their responses with the rest of the group. The questions included:

Do you think sustainability could be improved at your allotments?

What facilities could improved at your allotments to encourage more sustainable gardening?

Would you like to be able to keep livestock at your allotment? What would you keep?

Responses were attached to the 'Visioning Tree' and recorded photographically. The responses were then cleared before each new group.

Facilities and Access for All

This activity looked to establish what practical aspects of allotments needed to improved and what additional facilities plot holder would like to see. The participants were asked to write down five answers to each of the following questions and then attach them to the story planters, before sharing their responses with the rest of the group.

What existing facilities need to be improved?

What additional facilities could be provided?

What facilities would you be happy to share with other allotment holders?

Each group had three separate story planters to collect the responses to each of the questions. The responses were recorded photographically before being cleared for each new group.

The facilitators also used this session as an opportunity to discuss accessibility to the allotments for different groups currently underrepresented in the growing community.

Greater Availability

This activity looked at waiting list management as well as increasing the provision of allotments across Glasgow. Participants were asked to explore potential new sites for allotments as well as alternative approaches, such as raised beds, shared plots and community gardens.

The first activity asked participants to find their 'Allotment Age', by combining the length of time they waited for an allotment with the length of time they had had one. This was recorded on the cards provided.

Next, participants were asked to write down the number of additional plots they would like to see created across Glasgow and where they would be located. Participants were then asked to identify these sites on a large scale map of Glasgow and put down a map marker in the correct location.

The map markers were recorded photographically before each new group.

Networks and Communication

This activity asked participants to look at connections between the allotment sites and what opportunities there might be for additional support and training. In pairs, the participants were given postcards to fill out asking the following questions:

One thing I have learned from having an allotment is...

One thing I would like to be taught at my allotment is...

Or

One thing I think having an allotment will teach me is...

One thing I would like to be taught at my allotment is...

Participants were asked to tell the rest of the group their responses to these questions. The facilitators then used these as a starting point for a discussion around shared training opportunities between the different Allotment Associations.

Representation

This workshop focused on the issues surrounding governance of the allotments. The discussion focused on establishing positive, actionable steps to addressing current issues rather than getting caught up in the problems. Participants were asked to complete postcards with the following questions:

I wish my Allotment Association would...
In order to do this they would need to...

Or

I hope my Allotment Association will...
In order to do this they would need to...

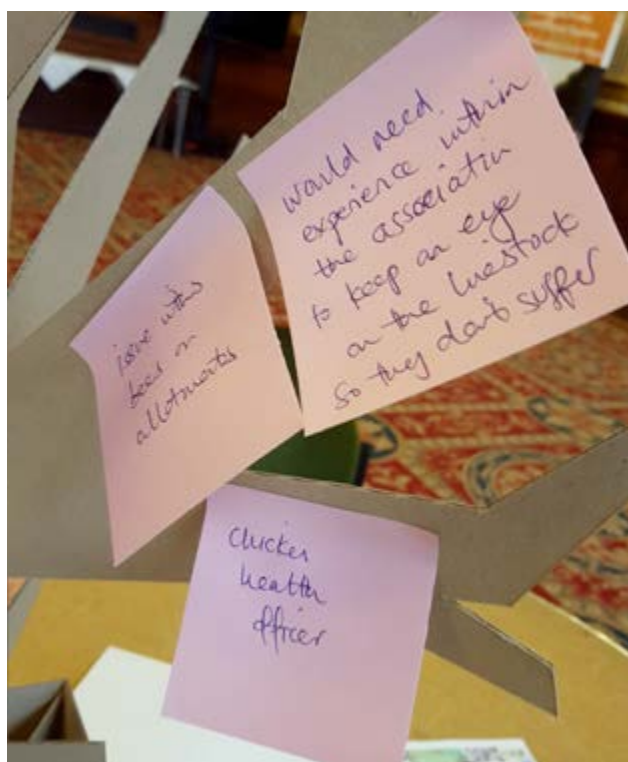
The facilitator then asked each participant in turn to share their responses with the rest of the group.



Story planters in use for Facilities & Access

Engagement Event #2

Selected Imagery & Workshop Output



Information Gathering Outcomes

The outcomes from Event #2 were photographed and recorded in situ and scanned to create a digital record.

Below are collated responses from the five workshops. Each workshop had a facilitator taking detailed notes of the proceedings. *For the full list of responses from Event #2 please see Appendix 3.*

Sustainability



Do you think sustainability could be improved at your allotments?

“a lot of the sites themselves are inherently sustainable”

“there is a broader sustainability benefit to the wider community”

“committees and associations need to be stricter enforcing rules around rubbish”

“Open Days are really important to supporting sustainable produce”

What facilities could be provided at your allotments to encourage sustainable growing?

“a skip is definitely necessary - even if its only available once a year”

“ponds would be good to boost wildlife the population”


Environmental
Sustainability
↳ recycling
and
reusing

where does
waste go?
Mansewood good
example
diary out.

Would you like to be able to keep livestock at your allotment? If so, what would you keep?

“there would need to be experience of keeping livestock within the committee”

“there is a certain fear around keeping bees on site, but education can change that”

can keep 
but they
get eaten.

Facilities and Access for All



What existing facilities at your allotment need to be improved?

“toilet facilities”

KEEP FACILITIES RELATIVELY
SIMPLE & TRULY
SUSTAINABLE.

“improve kitchen and communal room
facilities”

“water supply to communal hut”

“improved use of available recycling facilities”

“paths and access to the sites”

SECURE FENCES -
EXISTING ONES NEED
REPAIR. (COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITY)
??

What additional facilities could be provided at your allotment?

“a communal seating area”

“raised beds for children and people with disabilities”

Having a toilet
on the Plot would
be good.

“manure supply - not everyone has a car!”

What facilities would you be happy to share with other plotholders?

“not everybody wants to be a social bunny”

“communal composting bins”

“centralised area for storing materials”

“maintenance tools”



Greater Availability

How many years did you wait to get an allotment?

How many years have you had an allotment for?

2 years

8 years

This is your Allotment Age!

I would like to see

A Sufficient Amount of

allotments created in Glasgow across

the City to meet present demand sites.

My ideal allotment would be located near: anywhere in the City.

On the current waiting list....

“people’s proximity to allotment sites should be prioritised”

“a central waiting list might prevent people being on two waiting lists at once”

“people put their names down and then forget or move on”

“is the waiting list only as long as it is because plot inspections aren’t strict enough?”

“promotion of allotments isn’t too good due to a fear of over-subscription”

On the creation of new allotment sites in Glasgow...

“living near your allotment sites creates an increased sense of community”

“there should be one allotment site in every postcode across Glasgow”



“if the council is creating new sites then there needs to be a mixture of different plot sizes”

How many years did you wait to get an allotment?

How many years have you had an allotment for?

0 years

41 years

This is your Allotment Age!



Communication and Networks

Glasgow Allotment Says

One thing I have learned from having an allotment is:

How important co-operation/mutual support is.

One thing I would like to be taught at my allotment is:

Specific skills e.g. how to build an efficient compost bin.
(peer-based skill swap).

One thing my allotment site is great at it is: Sharing plants/advice/
help when needed.

On informal mentoring...

“an buddying system would be good but it can be difficult to marry people together”



“our allotment is great for informal chit chat”

“the co-operative aspect of having an allotment is really important”

“sharing seeds is a lot of fun”

“I’d like to see more peer to peer learning”

On more formal training....

“I would like to learn how to grow veg all year round”

“I would like to be taught how to build things that actually work!”

Glasgow Allotment Says

One thing I have learned from having an allotment is:

The joy of seeing things come to bloom.

One thing I would like to be taught at my allotment is:

Better year long planning for growing ^a

One thing my allotment site is great at it is: Runs a pretty good
open day.

“there should be training made available for committee members”

On allotment networks...

“there should be four allotment hubs - one in each area of the city”

“I have never heard of GAF”

“a nationwide network would be great”

Glasgow Allotment Says

One thing I have learned from having an allotment is:

Historic/cultural skills esp from ^{personally} veg.

One thing I would like to be taught at my allotment is:

How to manage + motivate volunteers.

One thing my allotment site is great at it is: General chit chat +
friendship

Representation

On issues with current representation...

“the committee sometimes gets above their station”

“the committee has too strict an idea of what an allotment is”



“I wish my allotment association would communicate more, consult more, carry out certain duties more consistently”

“I wish my allotment association had more people on its committee”

“there should be regular open meetings”

Glasgow Allotment Says

I wish my Allotment Association would: Communicate for frequently & fully with plot holders & consult more

In order to do this, my Allotment Association would need to: have regular open meetings - this is almost impossible to organise! Needs lots of energy!

Glasgow Allotment Says

I wish my Allotment Association would: have more people on its Committee and they would be active in running the Association.

In order to do this, my Allotment Association would need to: co-opt more plot holders onto the Committee.

On improving current representation...

“there needs to be a clear constitution so that plot holders know where they stand”

“there needs to be a division in secretary's role - its too much responsibility for one person”

Glasgow Allotment Says

I wish my Allotment Association would: hold open meetings at regular intervals during the year to share skills (eg how to build a compost bin that works!), discuss issues especially during the winter months.

In order to do this, my Allotment Association would need to: enlist an events co-ordinator to approach facilitators, book a venue, publicise - communicate with members.



Key Outcomes from Engagement Event 2

This event was originally designed to accommodate over 300 participants - all those who responded to the questionnaire were subsequently invited to this public consultation.

Unfortunately, turn out was poor with only 13 people attending. This could have been caused by a number of factors:

- The event was held on a bank holiday weekend (England and some Scottish workplaces)

- There were Open Days being held at two allotment sites on the day

- Reminders for the event were not issued in a timely fashion

While this has meant that the information gathered is not as qualitative as hoped, it did make it possible to facilitate specific and detailed conversations around the five key themes. The majority of the day's participants were members of either an Allotment Association or Glasgow Allotments Forum. While this should be kept in mind while reviewing the responses from the day, the information gathered provides an insight into allotments through the eyes of those who manage them. The participants who are not currently on committees were encouraged to speak up and challenge any statements they did not agree with.

Sustainability

Most participants had experience of waste disposal provision on site being abused and used for personal or domestic waste - effectively fly-tipping. There was further concern that other communal approaches to sustainability - such as use of water butts and composting heaps - would similarly not be used properly by a small number of individuals at each site.

The majority of participants expressed enthusiasm for keeping livestock - namely bees and chickens - on site. Bees in particular were seen to be advantageous

because of their wider benefit to the produce, providing that both training and an adequate provision of nectar and bee friendly planting were available to prevent swarming and mistreatment of the hives. There was recognition that all livestock must be carefully managed and anyone wishing to keep livestock should undertake training first. It was also clear that Associations felt that they needed more knowledge to understand when animals were not being cared for properly.

Facilities and Access for All

Most participants could identify existing allotment facilities on site which could be improved or updated - though one or two were happy with their sites. As with the questionnaire, participants wanted to see improved toilet facilities and better provision of recycling facilities.

In terms of additional facilities, the supply of manure and compost to site was raised by numerous participants, especially those who do not drive. People were also keen to see the creation of communal areas on site and more accessible forms of gardening, including raised beds.

Many participants were keen on the idea of sharing facilities with other plot holders, particularly for expensive and bulky resources such as power tools. However, those with previous experience of such schemes were quick to point potential difficulties including high levels of vandalism and theft.

Greater Availability

A number of participants - namely those on committees - felt that one of the reasons behind the huge waiting list demand was to do with the number of plots currently not being used. They felt that stricter rules surrounding regular plot use might help to address this.

When the idea of a centralised waiting list was raised, many felt that it was not appropriate, as proximity to

one's plot has a huge impact on how often it is used.

All participants were keen to see the creation of new allotment sites across Glasgow. People agreed that any new site should contain a mixture of plot types and size for all levels of gardener. Community gardens and temporary sites were not seen as good substitutes for all that allotments sites offer.

Communication and Networks

The majority of participants felt that the informal network within each individual allotment site was strong. Everyone had, at one point or another, benefitted from peer to peer learning.

However, a number of participants expressed a desire for more formalised types of horticultural training, either from a qualified expert or an experienced plot holder. Even the longest standing plot holders present at the table still had questions about gardening that they were keen to have answered!

Many people were eager to see these networks expanded beyond individual sites. They felt that a Glasgow wide allotments network would provide a great platform for sharing information, advice and training.

As well as horticultural training, people were interested to see the provision of training for committee members, particularly those who had not been on a committee before, to help improve allotment governance.

Representation

As with the questionnaire returns, a range of issue with allotment governance were raised. Because of the high number of association representatives present at this consultation, it was possible to gather a different perspective on these issues.

Those currently on committees spoke of how hard it is to engage plotholders and mobilise volunteer groups to perform communal maintenance tasks.

Most committee members said that their association held open meetings for plotholders but these were either poorly attended or descended into chaos.

Those not currently on committees voiced that their associations could be power-hungry and prone to bullying tactics.

In order to improve the current situation, a number of suggestions were made, by both committee members and plotholders. Firstly committee members, particularly those who are new to the role, would benefit from support and training. The allotment associations need to have a clear constitution which is adhered to at all times. Participants thought that this could be standardised across Glasgow, and that it would be beneficial to clearly define the role and responsibilities of each committee member.

Recommendations

From this report and the outcomes of all the consultation points of contact, it is evident the important and vital role allotments play in many lives throughout Glasgow. They offer people their own space - a chance to grow their own produce, encourage wildlife and spend time in the fresh air. For many people, time spent at their allotment is a valuable way of maintaining both physical and mental health. More importantly, they are a key social resource - a place to meet and mix with folk from the local area from different, diverse backgrounds.

However, there are issues across all allotment sites which need to be addressed. Each allotment site is unique and, as such, carries a different set of problems. Common issues include: lack of facilities, unsustainable funding, poor governance and poor communication. The greatest issue raised was that of availability - a feeling that based on waiting lists, demand in the city far outweighs availability. Before we begin to create new allotment sites in the city, it is important to look at the lessons which can be learned from established sites.

From the information gathered from the initial event, the questionnaire responses and the public consultation, we have identified and developed five key themes where the main issues and opportunities for improvement seem to lie. From the information we have gathered from ploholders and people on the waiting list, we have put together a number of recommendations and options for the future of allotments in Glasgow. By putting these suggestions in place we aim to safe guard a sustainable future for allotments and truly let Glasgow flourish.

Sustainability

All ploholders recognise the important role allotments play in the green life of the city - promoting biodiversity, creating a habitat for wildlife and increasing plant life and trees. There was a clear desire to further promote

this aspect of growing and we suggest this could be achieved through several approaches:

- The promotion of organic growing by designating low pesticide plots and areas in each allotment site
- Provision to allow ploholders to keep chickens and bees on their plots, along with support for Associations to understand and provide guidance
- Each site should have a full set of recycling bins to be uplifted fortnightly by the council
- Skips should be provided at allotments at the beginning and the end of the growing season along with signage which clearly identifies what can and cannot be thrown away
- Encouraging plot biodiversity through the creation of ponds and native planting

Facilities and Access for All

In order to improve growing conditions at current allotment sites, ploholders would like to see a number of existing facilities updated, alongside the addition of others. However, any facilities added should be robust, simple to maintain and sustainable. The following should also be kept in mind with the creation of any new allotment sites:

- Any new facilities should be applied in consultation with ploholders on a site-by-site basis - there is not one uniform solution
- Toilet facilities need to be improved across all allotment sites and added where they do not currently exist
- Paths, fences and site infrastructure needs improved and regularly maintained in consultation with ploholders
- Manure and compost should be delivered to site and included in the rent cost, as bulk buying reduces cost and diminish reliance on private vehicles

Greater Availability

Waiting lists were a key issue raised across the board by ploholders, committee members and, of course,

those on the waiting list. While the obvious solution is creating more allotment sites in the city, there are other approaches to help alleviate the issue:

- Those applying for allotments need to be well briefed on the amount of work an allotment entails
- There needs to be a strategy in place to engage those who have been on the waiting list for a significant period of time - perhaps by inviting them to training opportunities open to current plotholders or suggesting local community gardens they could get involved in
- Any new allotment sites created should contain a mixture of plot sizes to accommodate demand

Communication and Networks

For most plotholders, the social aspect of having an allotment is one of the key benefits: the opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds and learn from one another. While these informal networks currently exist within individual allotment sites, plotholders are keen to connect with gardeners across Glasgow. They would like to see training and education used as opportunities to bring together plotholders from across the city, particularly during the winter months. In order to achieve this, we would suggest:

- The creation of regular training opportunities - for plot holders from across the city
- The creation of a Glasgow-wide allotments network
- Greater support for allotments to organise Open Days and cross-allotment learning

Glasgow Allotments Forum (GAF)

The Glasgow Allotments Forum is a Glasgow wide network set up to represent the interests of allotment sites and plotholders. It lobbys the council on behalf of allotment sites and helps disseminate important information to plotholders.

The majority of people who responded to the

questionnaire mentioned that they would like to see the creation of a Glasgow wide network for allotments, but very few people mentioned Glasgow Allotments Forum as providing this role. This lack of awareness and communication is attributed to Allotment Associations being unable to share plotholders' information with Glasgow Allotments Forum due to Data Protection rules.

As an organisation, they have great potential to create a vibrant and active allotments community. It could be the best platform to facilitate and support many of the recommendations under the theme of Communications and Networks. It could also be geared to provide support and training for committee members, as well as informal, impartial advice.

However, in order for it to benefit more plotholders there would need to be some fundamental changes in how the organisation communicates with the growing community. The relationship between Glasgow Allotments Forum and the individual Allotment Associations needs to be strengthened so that any information passed between the two organisations is properly distributed to all plotholders. All plotholders should be made aware of the Forum, both those who are new to allotments and require additional support and those who have long-standing horticultural experience.

Representation

Most of the difficulties plotholders highlighted related to the governance of allotments: plot inspections, enforcement of regulations and management of resources. While the majority of plot holders appreciate that committee members are volunteers working with limited resources, there is considerable concern that committees are not functioning efficiently and, in some instance, are mis-using their power. There are several aspects of governance which could be improved:

- The creation of a clear, standardised constitution to be applied across all Glasgow allotment sites, with particular care given to plot inspection standards and what constitutes an allotment
- All plot inspections should be carried out by an independent person, not a member of that allotment's site committee
- Support and training should be given to new committee members - even if they have served on the committee previously
- A complaints procedure should be put in place to allow people to raise an issues they might have with their committee with an independent body

Allotment Strategy Wishlist

1 | Organic Growing

raising awareness of and supporting organic and low-pesticide growing on site. Stricter controls on the use of certain chemicals

2 | Livestock

provision of support and training to keep bees and chickens on site safely and ethically

3 | Recycling & Waste Disposal

supply of recycling bins, skips and green cages with clear directions for use and uplift

4 | Toilets & Communal Facilities

installation and maintenance of toilets and shared social spaces on site

5 | Manure & Compost

the delivery of manure and compost to site to reduce cost and transport demands

6 | Paths & Fences

improvement and continued maintenance of site access paths and perimeter fences

7 | Waiting List Engagement

opportunities for training and education for those currently on the waiting list with little or no previous growing experience

8 | Shared, Starter & Temporary Plots

the use of shared, starter and just-for-now plots to allow those on the waiting list to start learning about and practising allotment maintenance

9 | Mixed Plot Sizes

any new allotment sites must contain a mixture of plot types and sizes to accommodate different levels of growing experience

10 | Training & Support

opportunities for formal support and training on a range of horticultural topics. Workshops which can be shared with ploholders across Glasgow

11 | Glasgow Wide Allotments Network

the creation of a Glasgow wide allotments network to connect sites across the city, sharing opportunities for training, learning and socialising

12 | Cross Allotment Learning

opportunities for ploholders to learn from other allotments, through the use of Open Days, allotment mentoring and skills sharing workshops

13 | Clear Constitution

the creation of a clear, straightforward constitution which is standardised across all allotment sites including regulations for plot inspections

14 | Support & Training

the introduction of support and training for all committee members and clear definitions of what each role entails

15 | Complaints Procedure

creation of a straightforward complaints procedure to allow ploholders to raise any issues they have at their allotment with a supportive, independent body

