

Right to Grow: Community Food Growing

Resources & Contacts Guide

Parks and Greenspace Development Team, City of Edinburgh Council

Last updated: September 2026

About this guide

This guide is for community groups growing food in Edinburgh, whether you're just starting to think about a project or already running one and looking for more information or extra support. It brings together the key contacts and resources you're likely to need, in one place:

- Who to contact at the City of Edinburgh Council, depending on what you need
- Practical guides and toolkits for setting up and running a community growing project
- Useful organisations and networks for advice, funding, insurance, volunteers and training

If you can't find what you're looking for, or a contact detail here is out of date, please get in touch with the Parks and Openspace Development Team so we can update the guide.

In this document: Before you start • Useful resources • Useful contacts

1. Before you start: land and permission

Before you can set up a community garden, you'll need to find a suitable site and get permission from the landowner to use it.

If the site is owned by the City of Edinburgh Council, get in touch with the Council to get advice on next steps and any permissions you'll need. If you're not sure who to contact, email the Parks and Openspace Service at parks@edinburgh.gov.uk and the team will point you in the right direction.

2. Useful resources for community food growing

Webpages and guides with practical information on setting up and running a community food growing project.

Topic	Resource & link	Details
Starting a garden	Start a Garden – Growing Together	• Growing Together is an initiative which Edible Estates co-ordinates on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council to support community gardening in council estates. • Tips on how to start a garden • Newsletter with news and updates on food growing
Community food growing projects in Edinburgh	Community Growing Projects 2025 – City of Edinburgh Council	A map of community food growing projects in Edinburgh
Right to Grow campaign in Edinburgh	Right to Grow – Thriving Greenspaces	Updates about the food growing campaign in Edinburgh

Topic	Resource & link	Details
Community growing guide (Scotland-wide)	Community Growing Resource Pack – Social Farms & Gardens FCFCG Community Growing Resource Pack (PDF)	• Different models for community growing • Starting up • Finding the site • Planning and designing the site • Organising the group • Volunteers: induction, training and retaining • Building connections with businesses and partners • Budgeting • Action and business planning • Evaluation and organisational health
Land and site guidance (Scotland-wide)	Growing in the Community – Scotland Land Guide (PDF)	• Places to grow • Getting started • Developing a site and financial practicalities • Legislative and regulatory framework • Planning matters • Community empowerment • Leases, licences and landshare agreements • Lease templates
Edible Estates	Home – Edible Estates	Support for community gardens, plus training programmes for children and young people.
North Edinburgh projects	Granton Community Gardeners – Local Links	A list of food growing projects and organisations in North Edinburgh
Food growing tips & information	Get Growing Scotland	• Food growing information and tips on what and how to grow • Community Learning Exchange network
Gardening advice, training & recognition	RCHS – Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society	• Affordable workshops and talks on gardening and horticulture • Gardening hints & tips for growing in Scotland's climate • Demonstration allotment and teaching garden at Saughton Park • Horticultural Groups Award: recognises the achievements of community and friends' groups
Gardening & nature tips	Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust	Gardening tips: recycling, gardening for nature, herbs and fungi information, and more.

Topic	Resource & link	Details
Get Gardening toolkit	Get Gardening – Trellis	• How to start a garden • "How to" videos • How to find funding • Health & safety • Evaluation • Working with volunteers • Horticulture and year-round gardening tips • Group activity sheets • Events & conferences
Therapeutic gardens	Set up a Therapeutic Garden – Trellis	A guide on how to set up a therapeutic garden

3. Useful contacts

Other Council teams, organisations and networks that can help with specific aspects of running a community garden — from funding and insurance to biodiversity advice and event permissions.

Topic	Who	What they do	Contact details
Current park development projects, ideas & initiatives	Parks and Openspace Development Team, City of Edinburgh Council	• Information on current projects in Edinburgh's parks and greenspaces • If your group has an idea or initiative for a park or greenspace, the team can help you develop it	thrivinggreenspaces@edinburgh.gov.uk
Parks & Greenspace Officers	City of Edinburgh Council	• Management of parks and amenity areas in Edinburgh • Advice on horticulture and biodiversity • Locality-based: check the CEC Localities Map to find yours	South East David Kyles david.kyles@edinburgh.gov.uk 07710 114 145 North East Laura Shelbourn laura.shelbourn@edinburgh.gov.uk 07711 920 814 South West Jennifer Johnstone jennifer.johnstone@edinburgh.gov.uk 07789 271 578 North West Ritchie Fraser ritchie.fraser@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 529 5050

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Greenspace maintenance	Greenspace Team Leaders (operational services), City of Edinburgh Council	• Greenspace maintenance • Grass cutting in park and non-park areas • Locality-based: check the CEC Localities Map to find yours	South East Lewis Dickson lewis.dickson@edinburgh.gov.uk 07899 936 491 North East Ross Stevens ross.stevens@edinburgh.gov.uk 07733 300 173 South West Derek Dickson derek.dickson@edinburgh.gov.uk 07920 235 265 North West Gary Hook gary.hook@edinburgh.gov.uk 07788 150 266
Local Councillor	City of Edinburgh Council	Represents ward constituents on the Council	www.edinburgh.gov.uk/councillors 0131 200 2323
Natural Heritage Service	City of Edinburgh Council	Works with community groups to manage Edinburgh's countryside resource	naturalheritageservice@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 529 2401
Edinburgh Green Spaces Forum (EGSF)	EGSF	Umbrella organisation for Friends of Edinburgh Greenspace Groups: shared issues, experience, advice and initiatives	edinburghfriendsforum@gmail.com
Access	Andrew Law, Access & Partnership Officer, City of Edinburgh Council	Advice on access rights and responsibilities under Outdoor Access legislation and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code	andrew.law@edinburgh.gov.uk
Allotments	Mercedes Main, Allotment Officer, City of Edinburgh Council	• Manages Edinburgh Council-owned allotments • Information on allotment availability	mercedes.main@edinburgh.gov.uk
Biodiversity	Biodiversity Team, City of Edinburgh Council	Guidance on biodiversity issues	biodiversity@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 469 3920

Topic	Who	What they do	Contact details
Cemeteries	Bereavement and Cemetery Service, City of Edinburgh Council	Manages and maintains 43 cemeteries and churchyards in Edinburgh	bereavement@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 664 4314
Charitable status	Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)	- Information on setting up a charity in Scotland - Registers new charities in Scotland	www.oscr.org.uk 01382 220 446
Practical project support & insurance	The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)	- Insurance for voluntary/community groups - Help with practical projects (tree and bulb planting, path building, community gardens, etc.) - Training courses, online handbooks and community networking	edinburgh@tcv.org.uk www.tcv.org.uk/scotland
Volunteers	Volunteer Edinburgh	- Supports voluntary organisation development and volunteer opportunities - Provides training to voluntary organisations - Examples of health & safety, equal opportunities and child protection policies	www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk 0131 225 0630
Volunteers	Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC)	- Voluntary sector support and coordination - Manages grant scheme for Edinburgh voluntary groups - Local offices in South and West Edinburgh	www.evoc.org.uk 0131 555 9100

Topic	Who	What they do	Contact details
Volunteers (young people)	The Green Team	- Volunteers aged 14-25 help with project identification and planning - Conservation work including path building and habitat management	www.greenteam.org.uk info@greenteam.org.uk 0131 337 7227
Volunteers	Lothians Conservation Volunteers	Practical conservation projects in Edinburgh and the surrounding area	www.lcv.org.uk enquiries@lcv.org.uk
Volunteers (students)	Dirty Weekenders (Edinburgh University Conservation Society)	Not-for-profit group assisting with practical gardening projects	dirties.org.uk dirtyweekenders@gmail.com
Community Councils	Community Council Liaison Officer, City of Edinburgh Council	Voluntary groups with an interest in their community's wellbeing	community.councils@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 469 3838
Disclosures, PVG	Disclosure Scotland	Information on the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme: essential for work with young people	www.disclosurescotland.co.uk info@disclosurescotland.co.uk 0870 609 6006
Disclosures, PVG	Central Registered Body Scotland	Advice on applying for a disclosure check and joining the PVG scheme	www.crbs.org.uk 01786 849 777
Events	City of Edinburgh Council	Advice on statutory regulations and permissions, and contacts for Council services needed to support public events	Organise events in parks and open spaces - City of Edinburgh Council publicspaces@edinburgh.gov.uk
Licensing	Licensing, City of Edinburgh Council	Information on licence requirements	licensing@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 529 4208
Play areas	Parks & Openspace, Place, City of Edinburgh Council	- Information about play areas - Reporting issues in play areas	Play areas in Edinburgh Parks - City of Edinburgh Council playareas@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 608 1100

Topic	Who	What they do	Contact details
Trees	Forestry Service, City of Edinburgh Council	Issues relating to Council-owned trees and woodlands	Trees and woodlands - City of Edinburgh Council Forestry.service@edinburgh.gov.uk
Litter and graffiti	Task Force Managers, City of Edinburgh Council	• Litter picking • Servicing and location of litter bins • Specialist graffiti removal service	Find your locality office - City of Edinburgh Council
Memorial benches / presentation seats	Sarah Fraser, Parks Programmes Officer, City of Edinburgh Council	Information on donating a memorial seat or bench	Presentation seats - City of Edinburgh Council sarah.fraser@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 529 7941
Relevant national charities	Greenspace Scotland	• Registered charity working to improve parks and green spaces in Scotland • Monthly bulletin on funding, news and events	www.greenspacescotland.org.uk info@greenspacescotland.org.uk 07825 678 277
Relevant national charities	Keep Scotland Beautiful	Runs campaigns including National Spring Clean, Dumb Dumpers and Poop Scoop Week	www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org 01786 471 333