



Green 2 Grow



Food-People-Nature

**An Information Support Pack
For Local Councils
in relation to Green Space &
Greening & Growing Activities**

www.calc.org.uk

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Introduction

Green Space 2 Grow is a CALC initiative to support Town and Parish Councils in Cumbria to increase the use of available green space in their areas for a range of growing and greening activities.

Green spaces and growing give a range of benefits to our health and wellbeing, our environment and our communities.

As we know Parish Councils have the power to obtain and supply land for allotments, so allotments are the obvious 'available' green space that could be identified. However, there are lots of other potential green spaces that can be used for growing and greening activities in our communities such as:

grass verges along the roadside and in carparks, commons and open spaces, parks, footpaths and bridleways, village greens, and green space around community buildings.

This information pack has been produced with support from partners, organisations, and community groups whose activities are related to climate action, sustainability, growing and greening activities that we hope will help and inspire you.

We know that some town and parishes in Cumbria are already very successful in this area, and we hope that by showcasing some of their activities will encourage you and give ideas to get growing and greening!

CALC can support town and parish councils to:

- **Identify available green space in their areas to:**
 - create their own growing and greening activities
 - connect with growing and greening community groups and organisations who would like to use your green space

Growing and Greening activities can:

- encourage people to reduce their carbon imprint and join local climate action
- support communities around the increased cost of living in relation to food, healthy eating, sourcing food locally and reducing food miles
- support health and wellbeing
- encourage good neighbourliness AND
- be achievable in available green spaces in both our rural and urban town and parishes

CALC will do this by:

- **Providing town and parish councils with the support they require including:**
 - connecting with community groups who want to create community growing/greening activities

- supporting town/parish councils with ideas and resources to create and lead their own community growing/greening activities (included in this information pack)
- providing support where possible to make the green space available to start activities

Kate Grove, Resilience Officer Cumberland

Cumbria Association of Local Councils

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Local councils' existing powers relating to Green Space & Greening and Growing Activities

The Environment Act 2021 made changes to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 in respect of biodiversity.

Section 40 of the 2006 Act, in force 1 January 2023, places a duty on all local authorities, including parish councils, to from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take to further the general biodiversity objective.

The general biodiversity objective is the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England so all parish councils must take biodiversity into account in all their decisions and actions. The government has issued [guidance](#) on complying with the duty.

Allotments and markets: [Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, ss 23, 26 and 42] (Food Act 1984, s. 50)

- This allows the promotion of local produce and healthy eating
- This can help to reduce food-miles
- Allotments powers also enable the provision of communal food-growing sites and initiatives, run by associations and cooperatives.

Commons, ponds, open spaces, recreation etc (Open Spaces Act 1906, s.15; Highways Act 1980, ss 47]

- Scope to practise good environmental management, accommodate recycling facilities etc on the council's land
- Scope to plant trees on, and maintain, highway verges

Neighbourhood planning [Localism Act, 2011; Neighbourhood Planning Act, 2017 and National Planning Policy Framework,)

- Scope to include environmentally friendly planning policies re design, routes, landscaping etc
- There is a continuing need to ensure that Neighbourhood Plans have 'teeth', and that they can be more than just land-use allocation policies.

Permitted development rights (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, part 12):

- Councils may erect and operate, without the need to seek planning permission, a wide variety of small buildings, equipment, and other structures on their land, for the purposes of any of their functions or public services.
- This can include a range of small 'green' developments

Future opportunities- identified by NALC

Recommendations for NALC policies and services: 'legal advice' on the creative use of the powers already available to local councils

- Local councils should be given a direct power to undertake tree planting and other eco-friendly activities on a much wider range of land, beyond just their own recreational spaces and highway verges.
- The 'section 137' expenditure limit on community energy facilities and activities should be removed
- Local councils should be given the power to promote and operate facilities and services to recycle waste and re-use resources.
- The role and effectiveness of neighbourhood plans in relation to Climate Change should be protected and given more weight in decision-making.



Ideas for local green spaces

- Community orchards including avenues of fruit trees along grass verges
<https://www.slorchards.com/>
- Woodland projects- Cumbria Woodland, Woodland Futures Project offers support and training, see page 8
- Fruit bush hedges (e.g., blackcurrants or gooseberries) also consider more traditional fruits, (sloes, bullace, gages, crab apples, quince etc.)
- Wild Harvest hedges - [Free Trees for Schools and Communities - Woodland Trust](#)
- Flowering herbs instead of flower beds e.g., marjoram, rosemary, mint, thyme, chives etc.
- Community allotments for vegetables
- Encourage would-be gardeners to grow vegetables in other people's gardens (with their permission of course!) This could be particularly beneficial for older people who are no longer physically active and cannot maintain their plot.
- Consider access to water and where you could store tools etc.

Think about the produce:

- Ways of storing excess fruit and vegetables e.g., jams, chutneys, dehydrating, juices, flavoured gins etc <https://www.slorchards.com/press-hire>
- WI 'how to...' event.
- Ways of sharing excess - veg swaps or trading local produce to be used in pubs and restaurants for vouchers for a meal out.
- Donate surplus from allotments to Food Banks or local 'meals on wheels' type initiatives supporting vulnerable members of the community.
- School harvest / foraging day

Get people involved:

- Ask people what they would like to see and advertise for volunteer gardeners
- Encourage a sense of 'civic pride' and healthy exercise
- Promote the gardens as way to meet your neighbours and cut down on food costs / your carbon footprint
- Help reduce loneliness and isolation - [Age UK | The UK's leading charity helping every older person who needs us](#)
- Social Prescribing team
- Think about benches, places for people to sit, and interpretation boards that explain what the initiative is all about (e.g., 'eat local, grow local' - 'please do walk on the grass!')

What else could you do?

- Set up a community composting scheme to enable people to get rid of their food waste [Cumbria Master Composters | Garden Organic](#) provide information and training on individual and community composting
- Use the space to promote active transport e.g., bike racks or improved footways to access
- Think about accessibility - opportunities for wheelchair users / people with sensory impairments
- What about a beehive (yes, I can hear the health and safety alarm bells ringing!) [Rent a Beehive | Hosting a Beehive in Your Backyard \(kinnibeas.com\)](#)
<https://thebeecentre.org/> or insect hotels?
- Bughingham Palace, Muncaster Castle - [Conservation Matters at Muncaster Castle](#)

****Ideas for local green spaces was kindly produced for CALC by Nick Lancaster and Helen Attewell, Cumbria Action for Sustainability 22.8.22****

Organisations and Groups who can offer Information, Support or Training related to growing and greening activities

***Westogether-** West Cumbria Climate Action Group formed in 2023. Support available from members in relation to growing and greening activities and climate action. Contact helen.attewell@cafs.org.uk for more information and how to get involved with Westogether.

***Cumbria Woodland, Woodland Advisory Service:** [Cumbria Woodlands](#)

Benefit from their FREE Woodland Advisory Service, which provides impartial advice to those looking to create or manage woodland. This can be whether you are looking after ancient woodland, applying for woodland creation grants, information on the Cumbria Coastal Community Forest or getting started with Agroforestry.

Contact info@cumbriawoodlands.co.uk for a free consultation.

***Cumbria Master Composters:** [Cumbria Master Composters | Garden Organic](#) to see how you can get involved and for information on training and events

***Garden Organic:** [Organic growing advice | Garden Organic](#)

***CAfS (Cumbria Action for Sustainability):** There's so much inspirational action going on in towns and villages across Cumbria, as local people come together to raise awareness, support each other, and develop projects to cut carbon emissions.

On this page, [Sustainability groups in Cumbria - CAfS](#) you can find out more about some of the local sustainability groups across Cumbria, but you can also get in touch with CAfS to find out more about setting up your own group if there isn't one near you, and the support we can offer. If you're looking to set up your own activities or groups, [funding is available to help you get started](#). Email helen.attewell@cafs.org.uk

[\(Also see our guide on how to go about making a community more sustainable.\)](#)

***ACTion with Communities Cumbria:** [Rural and community development charity for Cumbria - Action with Communities in Cumbria, Penrith, Cumbria \(cumbriaaction.org.uk\)](#) ACT can help connect town and parish councils with community groups who are involved with growing and greening activities and also help set up new ones with information and resources available on their website.

***The National Allotment Society:** [About Us - The National Allotment Society - National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd \(nsalg.org.uk\)](#) The National Allotment Society (NAS) is the leading national organisation upholding the interests and rights of the

allotment community across the UK. We work with government at national and local levels, other organisations and landlords to provide, promote and preserve allotments for all. We offer support, guidance and advice to our members and those with an interest in allotment gardening. Support includes growing advice.

***Incredible Edible:** [Start a group - Incredible Edible](#)

‘Community is at the very heart of Incredible Edible’s work and our growing patches are edible attractions to get people talking. From its inception, Incredible Edible sought to show how ordinary people can transform their own landscapes and turned disused plots into abundant sources of healthy food. Working with whoever is willing, we create powerful connections through food, which lead people to believe that when we act together each of us is stronger for it’.

They have created 10 steps to being Incredible as a handy tool if you’re thinking about starting a group in your local community. Once you sign up, you’ll get access to their full Get going guide and resources, with everything you need to get started

***Mental Health Foundation:** [Thriving with Nature | Mental Health Foundation](#)

They have created a report outlining activities and resources of how to connect people to nature.

***Royal Horticultural Society:** [Tips on gardening in a changing climate / RHS Gardening](#)

Have lots of great gardening tips and resources to improve wellbeing, tackle climate change and improve biodiversity.

***Hubbub Foundation:** [Tips for getting started with growing | Hubbub Foundation](#)

***West Cumbria Rivers Trust:** [West Cumbria Rivers Trust \(WCRT\)](#)

West Cumbria Rivers Trust has a crucial role to play in raising awareness and increasing understanding of West Cumbria’s rivers and lakes. They do this by connecting with people locally to make a positive difference to the health of rivers, lakes, people, and wildlife.

***Woodland Trust:** [UK’s Largest Woodland Conservation Charity - Woodland Trust](#)

***Lake District National Park:** [Local communities: Lake District National Park](#)

Area Rangers work with residents, businesses, community groups, landowners, and farmers. They are the first point of contact for:

- new local initiatives or community projects

- the Lake District Communities Fund (2012-2020)
- access and recreation enquiries
- more information about any aspect of the LDNPA's work

***Eden Rivers Trust:** [Your Eden - Eden Rivers Trust](#)

- Connect people with rivers- increasing understanding of how rivers work, encouraging people's enjoyment of the amazing wildlife and special places and inspiring them to take action and help care for our rivers.
- Improve the natural processes within the Eden catchment, on land as well as in the river, nurturing wildlife habitats, reducing flood risk and providing cleaner water.
- Protect the Eden's unique and iconic biodiversity, ensuring our native plants and animals survive and thrive.

***Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre** [Homepage - Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre \(cbdc.org.uk\)](http://cbdc.org.uk)

Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre brings together, analyses and shares information on Cumbria's natural history, wildlife sites and habitats for education, research and to help people make sound decisions when planning to develop and manage land sustainably.

***Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Pilot Scheme** [Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Pilot Scheme | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

In August 2020 the government announced that Cumbria will be 1 of 5 Pilot areas trialling the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The purpose of the LNRS is to restore and link up habitats so that species can thrive, and agree the best places to help nature recover, plant trees and woodland, restore peatland, mitigate flood, and fire risk, and create green spaces for local people to enjoy.

With an agreed LNRS in place, the nature recovery work of everyone in Cumbria - from the designated landscapes and large conservation partnerships, to farmers, local businesses, and community groups- can help to deliver a bigger, better, and more joined up nature recovery network across the whole of the county.

Cumbria County Council is leading this project. Working with a wide range of partnerships, organisations and individuals that have an interest or influence in nature recovery will be key to developing an effective strategy for the county.

***Natural England**

Can support with connections with other existing projects and partners who may be able to and offer advice and best practice.

Can support with access to research and evidence data around connecting people with nature, barriers to connecting with nature and health and wellbeing in regard to access to nature, for example the [Nature Connection Handbook](#), [Included Outside publications](#)

Publish the national [People and Nature](#) and [MENE surveys](#), with information about who is and isn't connecting with nature.

[Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Report 2019](#)

Have available the [green infrastructure mapping tool](#), allowing you to view local greenspace and access to green infrastructure for local populations

May be able to help support with advice around access to funding opportunities

For more info contact Claire Green, Natural England Cumbria Inclusion Senior Advisor
claire.green@naturalengland.org.uk

***Cumbria In Bloom** [Cumbria In Bloom - Keeping Cumbria Clean and Welcoming \(cumbria-in-bloom.org.uk\)](#)

Their main purpose is to engage with groups in Cumbria, encouraging participation in a range of competitions that promote improvement of horticulture, floriculture, and environmental issues in our region.

Closely following Britain in Bloom's campaign guidelines, their cohort of judges visit all projects over the summer to evaluate achievement and offer guidance.

Every Autumn, an awards ceremony is held to recognise and publicise the efforts of those who have taken part. We also nominate finalists for national recognition in the Britain in Bloom Competition.

***Zero Carbon Cumbria** [Home - Zero Carbon Cumbria - Carbon reduction action across the county.](#)

A hub for climate action in Cumbria, the Zero Carbon Cumbria website brings together all the great things happening across Cumbria to cut carbon emissions and help Cumbrians play their part in global action to stop the climate crisis.

***Cumbria Wildlife Trust**

Our Community Development Team is here to help people connect with wildlife [Meet the team](#)

The team works with community groups and schools to make Cumbria wilder

The Community Development Team wants to enable individuals and groups to play their part in creating a *Wilder Cumbria*. We do this by enabling people to take action, by creating opportunities to volunteer, and helping people learn about nature and wildlife.

The team supports community groups to take action for Cumbria's wildlife & wild places. Discover how you can help Cumbria's wildlife through simple acts you can take at home and in your local area. [Browse our list of action pages that give you simple](#)

instructions on 'How to' make a difference for wildlife. You'll find all sorts of inspiring and easy ways to help wildlife at home, including 'How to create a hedgehog hole' to 'How to build a pond'.

The team works with schools and other groups to help people learn about Cumbria's wildlife & wild places

We're an experienced team of educators. We're currently developing our specific programme for 2023. In the meantime, please contact us if you've an educational enquiry. In particular, we're looking at Forest Schools training as part of our offer.

We'd love to hear how you want to be part of *Wilder Cumbria* and take action for nature. Please contact any of the team by emailing community@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk

Join the conversation using #WilderCumbria

The Community Development Team is building a network of people who want to be involved in creating a *Wilder Cumbria* and always pleased to hear about what you're doing. So, please do share your images and stories with us, using #WilderCumbria in social or via email community@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk

Some of the Growing and Greening initiatives that are taking place across Cumbria- to inspire you!

***Ulverston Town Council:** Ulverston in Bloom is a voluntary group which looks after all planting in Ulverston. This includes all tubs and planters, Jubilee gardens and planted beds around the town. The group have an allotment at Dragley Beck and grow and recycle some of their own plants. An orchard has been planted at Dragley Beck and beehives are to be installed enabling the group to harvest and sell its own honey. The planting is as wildlife friendly as possible.

[Ulverston in Bloom - Ulverston Town Council \(ulverstoncouncil.org.uk\)](http://ulverstoncouncil.org.uk)

Find out more about how Rotarians from the Rotary Club of ***Brampton & Longtown** together with residents and community organisations have set up a community gardening initiative based on the “Incredible Edible” model.

Their aim is to enhance some areas of the town whilst introducing residents to the opportunity of growing their own fruit and vegetables.

[Incredible Edible in Brampton and Longtown - Brampton & Longtown Rotary \(rotary-ribi.org\)](http://rotary-ribi.org)

***Windermere Town Council:** Cumbria Windermere Town Council has declared a climate emergency and is implementing strategies to increase the biodiversity of the local woods. Windermere Town Council manages thirty acres of woodland and has worked to actively cut back the overgrown and densely packed woods, intending to bring the woodland floor back to life. The bluebells are reviving and clear of small mammals are returning with the sound of birdsong

[Elleray Wood & Orrest Head - Windermere Town Council \(windermere-tc.gov.uk\)](http://windermere-tc.gov.uk)

Jubilee Garden, ***Greysouthen Parish Council** - this area is being planted with herbs and fruit trees for community purposes.

Parish wild flowering project is taking place in ***Oughterside and Allerby Parish Council**

***Lweswater Parish Council** have created a wildflower meadow on part of Mockerkin Green.

***Coniston PC:** Local group Get Coniston Buzzing, is a project to reintroduce a wildflower meadow in Coniston:

[Get Coniston buzzing - Project Update on this exciting project to reintroduce wildflower meadow in Coniston. - Lake District Foundation](#)

Silloth Green is maintained by **Silloth-on-Solway Town Council**. The Friends of Silloth Green work alongside the Town Council and its grounds maintenance team in ensuring their green spaces are kept to a high standard which has helped them achieve a Green Flag Award for the last 10 years in succession. 'We also allow them to use an allotment at our allotment site free of charge which they use to cultivate things for the Green and to teach the volunteers new skills'.

***Egremont Town Council** provides an allotment free of charge to Calderwood House, a hostel in Egremont, helping homeless people get back on their feet.

https://youtu.be/QwTqF_Vuv8s

***Great Salkeld Parish Council:** A small field known locally as Otteriggs field in Great Salkeld. 'We will continue to develop the field in any way that will encourage biodiversity and provide a pleasant spot for local residents to enjoy'.

***Workington Town Council:** 'Grow Well have a small building and plot within our park'.

[Grow Well | Facebook](#)

'Groundworks use our community room; we are working on projects to use our building as a 'living building'.

***Sedbergh Parish Council:** A Community orchard is on land provided by Sedbergh School. The Sedbergh in Bloom group plants and attends to flowers and bushes around the town including a small garden adjacent to the Information Centre

***Penrith Town Council:** [Green Spaces - \(penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk\)](https://www.penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Their Green Spaces initiatives under Climate Change include:

Grow Nature Fund

The purpose of the Grow Nature Fund is to encourage and support local green projects and its value represents the approximate number of people in Penrith £15,500.

Funded projects must deliver a clear and demonstrable benefit to the natural environment.

Here are some examples:

- Conversion or restoration of community greenspace to wildlife habitat: community orchards, ponds, wildflower meadows/verges, native hedges, street trees or woodlands
- Environmental improvements to a community centre or village hall grounds: installation of bee bricks, bug hotels, swift boxes, nest boxes, tree planting
- Initiatives to reduce single use plastics
- Local wildlife training and monitoring schemes
- Schemes to reduce invasive species, litter, noise, or light pollution in the environment
- Environmental aspects of a heritage restoration scheme
- Initiatives to help local people to connect with their environment.
- Activities which encourage people to grow nature and increase the public understanding and enjoyment of wildlife and heritage

Penrith Woods Project

It's our ambition to significantly increase all forms of canopy cover throughout Penrith, whilst strengthening the protection of our existing backbone of trees, woodlands, and hedges. Penrith Woods is an ambitious tree planting project with the principle aim of fighting climate change.

Value our Green Open Spaces

The Town Council has developed a draft Neighbourhood Plan and Objective 3 purpose is:

To protect green spaces that have been identified as important to both wellbeing and the local community.

***Cummersdale Parish Council:** The Cummersdale Copse provide a relaxing area, which was created in 2004. The Copse provides the community to become involved with growing and conserving wildflowers etc.

<https://cummersdaleparishcouncil.org.uk/community-information/local-walks/>

The PC are hopeful that volunteers will get involved in conserving it.

The PC are supportive of the local Village Hall, that is planning to develop an adjoining garden.

***Millom Town Council:** There are plans to introduce community growing activities i.e., fruit trees/sensory garden (including herbs etc) in Millom Park.

***Cockermouth Town Council:** Trees have been planted in Harris Park extension

***Lowca Parish Council:** 'We have a green space that we have taken over from the Council. It's at the southern approach to the village. It's a combination of short cut grass, flower beds and a designated wildflower area. We took part in the GET CUMBRIA BUZZING initiative in May'.

***Beck Bottom Community Garden in Hensingham** is run by a small group of local volunteers from all age ranges and backgrounds who share a passion for gardening and take great pride in the upkeep of the area.

'We meet up every Saturday morning at 10am (weather permitting) to carry out gardening duties and general upkeep of the area. We welcome anyone, they do not have to have any horticultural knowledge.

We have helped transform a derelict area of former parkland into a cared for and attractive green space accessible to all. We have planted seasonal formal flower beds, rose beds, wildflower meadow areas and blossom trees to attract birds, bees, butterflies, insects, and other wildlife.

We have also constructed our own composting area so we can recycle all of our gardening waste and we practise organic gardening.

Our aim is to maintain and enhance the area known as Beck Bottom, Hensingham for the local community while promoting horticultural education, physical and mental health through gardening in partnership with Copeland Borough Council Open Spaces Department.

We also hope to help people suffering from loneliness and social isolation, we all enjoy a good chat whilst gardening and formed many new friendships. We are also now pleased to announce we are part of Copeland Borough Council's Social Prescribing Programme and can accept referrals from The Joy App.

Beck Bottom Community Garden Group have many plans for the future including herbaceous borders, further wildflower areas, herb garden, footpath improvements to name a few'. For more information look at their FB page: [Beck Bottom Community Garden Group | Facebook](#)

***Planting 4 Pollinators Project: [Planting for pollinators | Cumbria Wildlife Trust](#)**

Cumbria Wildlife Trust together with Cumbria County Council are working to reverse pollinator decline across north & west Cumbria.

The Planting for Pollinators project will cover over fifty sites. They will create, improve, and connect a mosaic of pollinator-friendly habitats, in turn providing food, shelter and nesting places for the likes of bees, butterflies, wasps and other insects.

Pollinator-friendly habitats include hedges, species rich grassland, scrub, deadwood, banks, glades, and flower rich gardens.

The sites are varied and include roadside verges, farmland, community green spaces, orchards, church grounds, and public & private gardens.

The project is looking to extend to the South West of Cumbria with sites across Barrow and Copeland receiving funding from Cumbria County Council's Environment Fund.

***Eskdale Mill Meadow Restoration Project [Tentergarth meadow restoration project update - Eskdale Mill](#)**