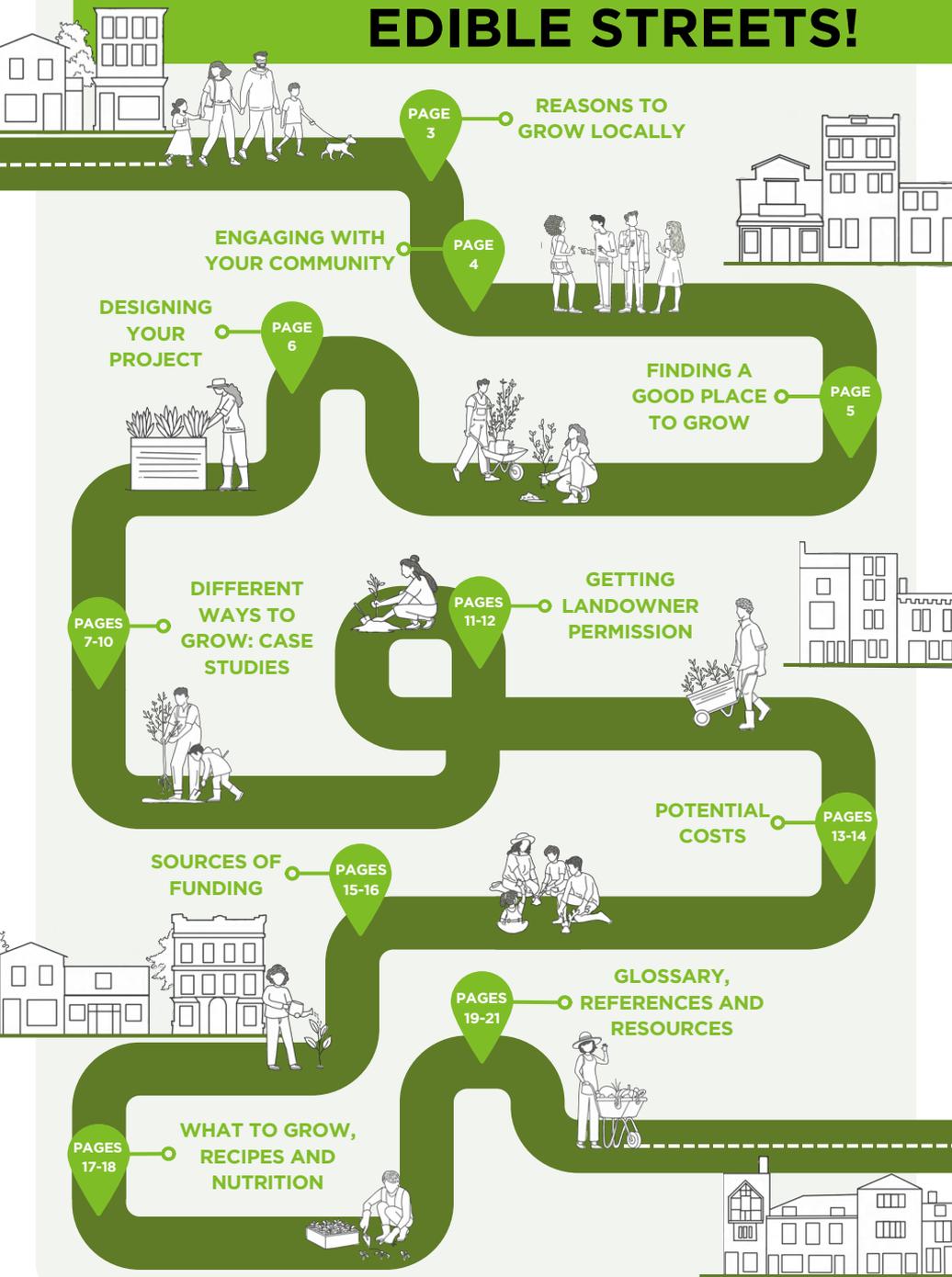


Pavements, verges, and other unused spaces woven into the streetscapes of Oxfordshire could be used for community growing with countless benefits for people and planet - they could become...

EDIBLE STREETS!





NOM!



The space on the pavement outside your front door, the grass verge you pass every day on your way to work, the alley that runs between you and your neighbour - these **empty, unloved spaces** can become **thriving places** where neighbourhoods come together to **grow plants and food!**

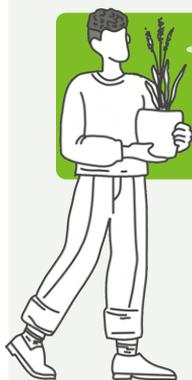
Transforming publicly accessible land into growing space can **green the local environment**, create opportunities to **improve health and well-being**, and help **build strong communities**. Using these places to grow food can combine the social benefits of allotments or community gardens, with the convenience of a private garden.

For those without gardens or in neighbourhoods where allotments have long waiting lists, **these spaces may provide the only opportunity to grow their own produce.**



In 2023, Hull City Council formally gave residents the **'Right to Grow'** on public land. Many local authorities across the UK are now considering following in their footsteps. Until that happens, setting up a growing project on public land is still eminently possible - with the help of some knowledge and persistence!

Neighbourhood growing projects come in all different shapes and sizes - from **window boxes** to **mobile planters** to **street orchards**. Almost all streets and roads have capacity to become somehow greener and tastier!



Our guide to community growing in urban and rural environments aims to provide tips and practical advice to help turn ideas for local growing projects in Oxfordshire into reality!

REASONS TO GROW LOCALLY

There are plenty of advantages to growing food locally - here are just a few of the potential benefits.

Growing edibles can help improve health and fitness.

Diets with varied fresh produce and fewer processed foods are good for all of us. Growing edibles can help create healthy eating habits and awareness around nutrition, particularly in children.¹ Gardening is also physical work - a good way of getting outdoors for regular exercise.



More plants of any kind will benefit local biodiversity.



There has been a 19% decline in animal species across the UK since 1970.² Growing in urban areas provides food and habitats for a multitude of life forms. In combination, these small, green spaces can help to create corridors through urban areas that are otherwise inhospitable for wildlife.

Neighbourhood projects strengthen communities.

Forming a local growing group is a great way to get to know people and make friends. Community members are less likely to experience loneliness and isolation when there are strong local networks in place.



Time outdoors improves mental and emotional wellbeing.



Research has repeatedly shown that regular interactions with green space is positively associated with improved mental health outcomes.³ Gardening in particular has been shown to help combat the symptoms of anxiety, stress and depression.

New projects offer opportunities to acquire new skills.

A community growing project is a chance to learn about horticulture. But you'll also have to get to grips with project management, fundraising, events organisation and more. If you want to learn new skills and build experience, this might be just the place to start.



Growing veg can reduce food waste and save money.



Growing fruit and vegetables can help to reduce dependence on expensive shop-bought fresh food. When you can pick what you need, you're likely to waste less, which is good both for the planet and for your finances.

ENGAGING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Working with your community is the way to make a project thrive! But building and sustaining collaboration will take time and effort. Here are just some of the things to think about.



MAKING CONNECTIONS If you've not already got a group together, you'll need to find and join forces with others locally. Talking to people is a good place to start: contact local allotments or community gardens, and get to know people in your community who are already keen growers. Spread word of your ideas via schools, community centres, residents' associations or other local groups to seek out untapped interest in your area. Reach out to larger community networks in Oxfordshire, as they may be able to put you in touch with people in your neighbourhood; they're also likely to become valuable sources of support and advice later on. Finally, remember that it's also really important to engage constructively with any negative, as well as positive, reactions to your plans.

Allotment sites in Oxford City are mapped on the City Council website [here](#). Elsewhere in Oxfordshire details of local allotments should be available through your town or parish council. CAG Oxfordshire has a useful [map](#) of member groups across Oxfordshire, many of which may have connections with local growing projects.*

FORMING A GROUP Depending on the scale of your project, and your group's ambitions, you may want to formalise the status of your group with a written constitution. A constitution will be necessary if you want your group to be able to open a bank account, which in turn you will need if you want to be able to apply for funding or to receive donations. It's also a good opportunity to clarify the objectives and rules of your group - which will help with managing expectations and getting things running efficiently.

A constitution can be brief - it's good to keep things simple. Draft constitutions for community groups are available online, such as [this one from Parks Community UK](#)



SUSTAINING COLLABORATION Make sure to create channels for group communication: WhatsApp and Facebook groups are great, but try to find ways to include those who are less tech savvy. Events will be important, as they'll help to build relationships and maintain enthusiasm amongst members. If well-advertised, they should also boost participation in the local community. Street parties, gardening sessions, seed and plant exchanges are just some things you could try. Events connected to food and cuisine can help to celebrate diversity in your group and welcome varied cultural and societal backgrounds. Once your group gets growing, make sure that watering and harvesting rotas are well-organised, and expectations around co-operation over tools, space and produce are clear. Remember to check in on members regularly, in order to be able to identify any potential issues before they develop.

FINDING A GOOD PLACE TO GROW

Choosing the right spot for growing on your road or street is key to success. But it's not a question of size - even small spaces can be used to grow food! Here's a list of some of the factors that might need to be taken into account when deciding on a location.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY



Think about the needs of different people who may be involved in the project. Will the site allow everyone to take part? For example, are there high kerb stones that might limit access for those with limited mobility? Is there too much fast moving traffic nearby for the site to be used safely by children?

ORIENTATION AND SUNLIGHT



Plants need the sun to grow! An overly shady spot will lead to plants failing to thrive, and perhaps a disappointing harvest.

OTHER USERS OF THE SPACE



Consider whether your plans are compatible with other uses of the space. Are you leaving enough space for other users of the pavement? Will plants obstruct the lines of sight along the road? Being considerate of other users will be beneficial in the long-term, as it'll encourage people to look positively on your efforts. The **Manual for Streets** is a helpful guide to things you might need to consider.

SECURITY



It's impossible to eliminate the risk of vandalism completely, but by choosing a site that has good **natural surveillance** and is well used by the community, the chance of damage can be reduced.

PROXIMITY TO A SOURCE OF WATER



Is the site close enough to an indoor or outdoor tap to be able to use a hose or carry a watering can? In some situations there might be another water source such as a stream that could be used. If there's a structure nearby, there might be potential for harvesting and storing rainfall.

STREET SERVICES



If you want to grow directly in the ground, or to create fixed raised beds, you'll need to find out the location of street services: gas, electricity, clean and foul water and telecommunication lines cross above and below verges and pavements, and all need to be accessible for maintenance. The **Highways Authority** will be the best source of information about what to look out for in your location.

DESIGNING YOUR PROJECT

Careful design can help your project to work for you, your community, and the environment. Here are some ways in which the design might be able to impact the success of your project.



● DESIGNING FOR USE

If you're building raised beds or planters, how much space will be needed between them? What heights and depths will be most ergonomic whilst also being suitable for growing? The RHS has some **useful guidance**, although there may be members in your group with specific requirements. Will you need a secure store for communal tools? Is there scope for composting on site? Can you design in opportunities for social activity, such as seating or spaces for play?

● DESIGNING FOR COMMUNICATION

Information signs are a good way to show consideration for the wider community, and may help to broaden involvement - remember to provide ways for people to get in touch. You may also need a communication board for group members: to record information about what's growing, watering and harvesting rotas, etc. Labelling plants clearly will help to make it easy for everyone to know what's what and stay engaged. If your project involves planting trees, regular watering will be crucial: watering signs may help to make sure this happens.

● DESIGNING FOR BIODIVERSITY

Growing in itself will be beneficial to local biodiversity, and the wider the variety of plants, the bigger the potential gain. Your design could offer other opportunities such as bug hotels, bird boxes, hedgehog homes - even mini ponds. Simpler features can also have an impact: leaving nooks and crannies will allow creatures to find their own space, which may ultimately be more successful. And you don't need to stick to natural materials to be wildlife friendly: a gabion basket filled with rubble can create just as important a habitat as a logpile - you'll just be catering for a different range of species!

● DESIGNING FOR YOUR BUDGET

If you're working with a limited budget, clever use of materials can help. Look out for scaffolding boards, pallets and other recycled materials. More unexpected salvaged materials and containers can also work, but think about what's appropriate for the space - your neighbours may think differently about what's aesthetically acceptable in terms of creative upcycling. And if you want to eat what you grow, remember to check your container materials are food safe.

● DESIGNING FOR YOUR TIMESCALES

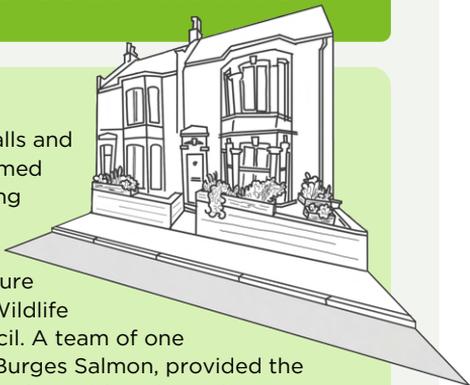
Are you designing a permanent or temporary growing space? Fixed raised beds in contact with the ground will make your planting more resistant to drought and extreme temperatures. Temporary structures, that can be relocated if necessary, might be a better option if your community group is less well-established.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO GROW: CASE STUDIES

Planters on pavements, parklets in parking spaces, fruit trees on verges - there are endless ways to grow on your street. The right approach will depend on the street layout, and other specifics of the site. Here are some examples of projects from Oxfordshire and elsewhere in the UK.

MY WILD STREET - BRISTOL

In Easton, Bristol, this project saw front walls and gardens along a Victorian terrace transformed with the addition of window boxes, climbing plants, bug hotels and bird boxes. Part of 'My Wild City', this scheme was one of many that aimed to make Bristol more nature friendly. The project was driven by Avon Wildlife Trust and part funded by Bristol City Council. A team of one hundred volunteers from a local law firm, Burges Salmon, provided the workforce to turn the project into reality. A short video about the transformation is available to watch [here](#).

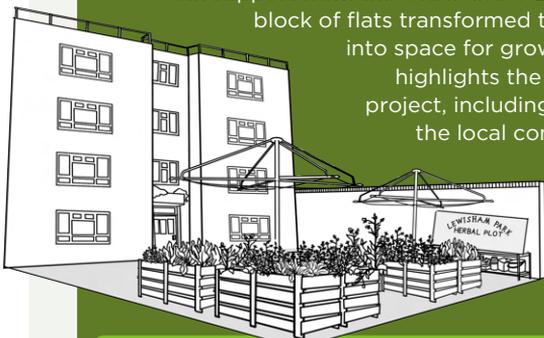


It's a great example of how support from local charities, local government, and local business can be combined and utilised to make things happen.

LEWISHAM PARK HERBAL - LONDON

With support from the wider Grow Lewisham initiative, residents of this block of flats transformed their disused communal drying area into space for growing edibles. This [video](#) by the RHS highlights the many positives that arose from the project, including the strengthening of ties amongst the local community. As resident and volunteer gardener Julian tells us, "we

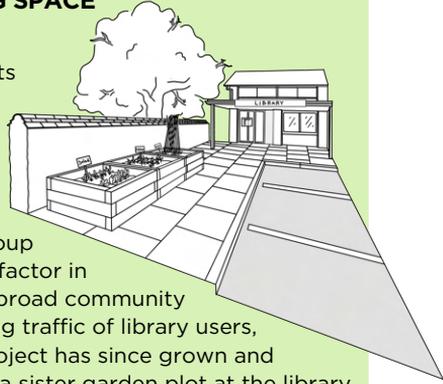
knew who was living next door". Project costs were kept low by using salvaged materials to build raised beds and planters for the space - nothing was bought new.



This low-budget garden is a wonderful demonstration of how a project with big rewards for the local community can be created from very little.

WALLINGFORD COMMUNITY GROWING SPACE - OXFORDSHIRE

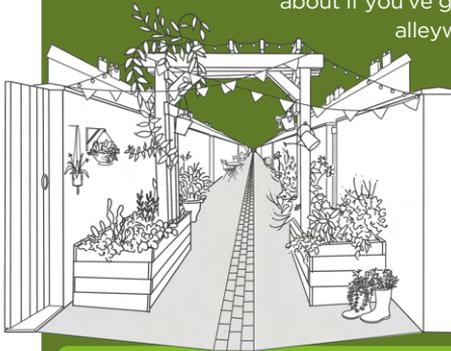
A few planters on the wide, empty pavements around Wallingford Library carpark were the humble beginnings of this Incredible Edible project, run by the Sustainable Wallingford group. The library and County Council helped get the project off the ground by giving their permission for the group to use the space. The location may be a key factor in the project's subsequent success - it invites broad community engagement via exposure to the daily passing traffic of library users, and provides a hub for group events. The project has since grown and linked with other local groups - there's even a sister garden plot at the library in the nearby village of Benson. Jointly, these groups recently received an RHS grant to fund further community growing projects around Wallingford.



This project illustrates the power of collaboration between community groups - and how small successes can pave the way for larger scale projects!

GINNEL GARDENS - MANCHESTER

Ginnels, snickets, tchures - depending on where you live, there'll be a different name for passages that sometimes run between houses and along back gardens. The terraced streets of Manchester and Stockport are crisscrossed with networks of ginnels, and increasing numbers are being transformed by local residents into thriving gardens. [This video](#) may help with things to think about if you've got potential to create a garden in a nearby alleyway. As these spaces are less public there's



perhaps more potential to get creative with recycling and up-cycling materials (assuming there's some consensus between residents). Many of the Manchester ginnels make use of unusual containers for growing in - bath tubs, wellies and wheeliebins are just some of the items that work in the small, semi-private context of a shared alley, but could be more controversial elsewhere.

The shared, semi-private nature of these spaces means they have great potential for community projects. Many ginnel gardens have become important places for socialising with neighbours, as well as growing.

EAT OFF YOUR STREET - LONDON

This project in Lambeth involved a mobile, edible ‘parklet’ on wheels, that could be moved between vacant parking spaces as necessary - an ingenious solution to the problem of maintaining access while creating growing space. The idea was thought up by a small group of neighbours, but through advertising on the Next Door app, many local residents soon became involved. Ultimately the project linked with the local Residents’ Association, embedding firmly in the community and providing a structure to oversee regular maintenance. The structure itself was built with timber donated by a local branch of Travis Perkins, and incorporated seating to help create a space for socialising. Many parklets (often less mobile) have been created by other community groups across London and other cities in the UK. The charity Living Streets has created this useful **toolkit** specifically to help people wanting to grow in vacant parking spaces.



Hopefully parklets can become an accepted alternative use for car-free owners of parking spaces - as swapping a car for a green space is likely to provide a net gain for the local community.

INCREDIBLE EDIBLE TODMORDEN - WEST YORKSHIRE

A guide to community growing wouldn't be complete without mention of this project in Calverdale, Yorkshire - the inspiration for countless other local growing initiatives across Europe. Started by two women, Pam Warhurst and Mary Clear, the project achieved massive local involvement. Unused land throughout the town was taken over for community growing - spaces around the police, fire and railway stations, the job centre, the health centre, the town hall, the market, and many more became home to beds producing fruit, veg, and herbs. Through getting people growing edibles, the project aimed to raise awareness around climate change and food sustainability, while simultaneously strengthening the local community. **This video** from Groundwork UK gives some insight into what was achieved.



The work required to achieve broad community involvement, and keep enthusiasm going, cannot be underestimated - but the potential outcomes make it worthwhile!

PITT STREET COMMUNITY SPACE AND ORCHARD - MANCHESTER

In this project, a sizeable but neglected patch of grass in Glodwick, Oldham, was turned into a community space with raised beds for growing veg. The transformation was led by the Oldham Council and Groundwork UK. A local charity, the Ghazali Trust, worked to ascertain residents' priorities and concluded that with many residents unable to get allotments locally, a space for growing was needed. After the transformation, the community noticed how the space felt more cared for, and littering became less of an issue. A short video from Groundwork UK is available [here](#). The project also included the planting of a mini orchard consisting of 14 fruit trees.



An urban orchard is eminently possible, and a great way to make a long-term difference. Just make sure you've got enough space to ensure falling fruit won't be an issue for pedestrians and passing traffic.

MALFORD ROAD EDIBLE GARDEN - OXFORD

This project made use of wide grass verges along a residential road in Barton, Oxford, to build raised beds for residents to use to grow edibles. The scheme also provided a space for neighbours to socialise, with the walls of the raised beds doubling as seating. A donation from Redrow funded the planting of a mini-orchard with apple, pear, plum, greengage and almond trees. Another donation from Thames Water funded the provision of water butts so that the planters could be maintained as sustainably as possible. As residents were unsure of the amount of time they'd be able to commit, the planters were filled with low maintenance edible perennials such as herbs and strawberries - plants that could be used for cooking and foraging, but which would largely look after themselves.



As well as having a positive impact for local biodiversity, many of the local community felt that the addition of trees and flowering plants enhanced their experience and sense of pride in their street.

GETTING LANDOWNER PERMISSION

An important step is to consider who owns the land you'd like to grow on - unless it's your own! - as you'll need their permission to use the space.

A **land registry search** is a quick way to find answers about land ownership, but you'll need to pay £3 per search. Be careful to do this through the **[gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk)**, as other service providers may charge more. Alternatively, contact Highways, the planning department or local councillors. It's worth talking to council authorities about your plans early on, as you'll ultimately need them on board to get permission to go ahead. Councillors with portfolios relating to planning, environment or health may also be good sources of support.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BE THE LANDOWNER? Land ownership is often unpredictable - there's no way of knowing for certain who will own a piece of land without making enquiries. Some land may not even be registered at all! To help get you started, here are some common ownership scenarios:

Road-side spaces: pavements, verges, empty corners etc...

Commonly owned by the **Highways Authority**, but can also belong to district, town or parish councils, or private landowners. If not owned by Highways, the verge or pavement may often have been 'adopted' by Highways for maintenance purposes, meaning it's still their consent you'll need.

Spaces in between buildings: alleys, tchures, ginnels, snickets etc...

Land further away from roads is much less likely to be either owned or adopted by Highways. Instead, it may belong to the district council, or the space may have been divided between adjoining properties.

Land on public rights of way: footpaths, bridleways etc...

This land frequently belongs to private landowners, such as local farmers, the University colleges or owners of adjoining properties.

It's also possible that you are the landowner! Growing on windowsills or the walls of front gardens is a simple way of getting a local growing project up and running. Watch these **BBC videos on [building](#) and [planting windowboxes](#)**.



MAKING THE CASE FOR YOUR PLANS You'll probably need to explain your proposal to various authorities along the road to gaining permission, so it'll help to put a persuasive case together in writing early on. Clearly identify the expected positive outcomes of your scheme. Explain how you've thought through any potential pitfalls of your project, and what measures you've taken to avoid them. Show you've considered other users of the space, and that no one will be inconvenienced. Put together a location plan, provide details of the designs of any structures, and pinpoint what types of things you intend to grow. The more specific you can be about your plans, the better!

SECURING CONSENT Different landowners will have different requirements for granting consent. Here's some guidance on what to expect and how to approach different authorities:

Highways Authority - Oxfordshire County Council

Any plants or structures, whether permanent or temporary, on land owned or adopted by the **Highways Authority** will require a licence from the **county council** for which there'll be an annual fee. To secure a licence, you'll need to show that you've thought round any implications for the use and management of the roads, pavements, and verges nearby. Having thorough plans will be very helpful at this point. You'll also need to have **public liability insurance** to cover up to £10 million. This may sound daunting, but packages for community groups are available for around £100 per year. If your group is part of a larger community organisation, they may already have cover in place.*



The exception on land managed by Highways is trees, where permission is granted by the County Council Tree Team. You'll still need to provide detailed plans and be able to evidence how your project will be managed, as there's potentially more issues with ongoing maintenance - watering, pruning, fruit fall, pests etc. - than with other sorts of growing. Getting in touch with the **Community Tree and Woodland Opportunities Team** is a good place to start, or you can submit your proposal through their **online portal** if your plans are more advanced.

District Councils

Permission for projects on unadopted, **district council** land will be granted through officials with responsibility for the **HRA**. Local councillors, or the cabinet member for Housing may be the best people to approach with your plans in the first instance. Again, it's possible that you'll have to provide **public liability insurance** for up to £5 million, depending on the council's existing insurance arrangements, the type of project and your location.

Town and Parish Councils

Most parish councils hold regular public meetings at which it should be possible to present your plans and discuss possibilities. As the government body closest to their electorate, parish councils will be inclined to support well considered projects of benefit to the community. Insurance requirements will depend on existing arrangements, the project and location.

Private Landowners

Explain your plans, and how they will be of benefit to both the community and the landowner - there may be opportunities in terms of publicity that will provide an incentive. There is precedent for success in Oxfordshire: Hogacre common has been leased by Corpus Christi College to the community for a jar of honey a year since 2011!

POTENTIAL COSTS

The initial costs of setting up your project will be followed by the ongoing costs of maintenance - it'll help to be realistic about these from the start.

● CONSTRUCTION

Work out how much any essential materials will come to, and factor in the cost of labour. But before buying anything from anyone, ask if the price can be reduced to help out a community project. [Homebase](#) stores, for example, will make donations to local community projects. Other local suppliers may be keen to help out your project in return for publicity. Before hiring labour, try to find skilled people in the community who could help out. This will have benefits other than saving you money - the more the local area invests in the project, the more rooted it will be in the community and the greater its chances of success.

● PLANTS

Plants can be a big expense, especially if you buy them at a reasonable size. Growing from seed is cheaper, and if you are involved at local allotments or community gardens, you might find people have seeds or cuttings they're happy to share - which is a great way to create links with other growers, too. If it's fully grown plants you need, try signing up to [Wayward Plants](#) - a group that works to re-home plants from horticultural shows with community gardens.

● SOIL

If you're growing in containers or raised beds, you'll need to factor in the cost of soil. But you may not need expensive topsoil all the way through - using a layer of subsoil at the bottom of deep beds will help with drainage. Or you could try experimenting with [hugelkultur](#) as a cheap way of [creating a rich organic growing medium](#). If you're growing directly in the ground, and you're going to be eating large amounts of what you grow, it's sensible to consider whether there's any possibility of soil contamination. If you're concerned, you should get the soil tested: there are private companies that do this, but you'll have to pay.

● TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Try to limit costs by sharing tools between group members. If you have to buy items, reduce costs by getting them second hand - try Ebay, Preloved, and local recycling networks. [Oxford Tool Share](#) and the Oxford [Library of Things](#) rent and deliver a range of gardening and DIY equipment - which can come in handy if you need items as a one off.

● MAINTENANCE

From time to time you'll have to replace broken tools and equipment, and potentially carry out repairs to raised beds or other structures. You should also factor in the ongoing costs of compost, grit, mulch, and any other specialist plant supplies you may need. But you may have to buy less than you think - by employing sustainable, DIY gardening practices and **permaculture** techniques you can create a lot of what you need for free. For example, you can make your own **peat-free compost**, create **potassium rich plant feed** using comfrey, and make a high quality **mulch from fallen leaves**. Growing and gardening in this way has the added advantage of being more likely to be organic, which will be beneficial for both the planet and anyone who may consume your produce!

● ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

You'll need a venue, refreshments, and activities to get people involved. Beware cutting costs by meeting in homes and private gardens - a neutral space where everyone feels at home is best. Are there community facilities that are cheaper to hire? Can you meet in a public space, like a park? Can group members help out with food and drinks? You'll also need some simple, low-cost activities to get different age groups engaged - try things like seed sowing, making pine cone bird feeders, or up-cycling water bottles into windowsill planters!

● LICENCING AND INSURANCE

If your project requires a licence and **public liability insurance**, there will be annual costs associated with these.

● PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Organising and managing any community gardening project will cost you in time. This is probably one of the most important expenses to consider - as time spent on a voluntary project is obviously time not spent in paid work. But it's also one of the factors most difficult to predict or quantify. Building and sustaining engagement, getting buy-in from the relevant authorities, and looking for sources of funding will be ongoing challenges. And that's all before you get down to the practical work of growing itself! Be specific about the time costs when applying for funding or talking to local councillors. There's a growing awareness of the benefits of community gardening projects, and this needs to come hand-in-hand with an understanding of the required investment.

Don't let this put you off - just make sure your expectations of what is achievable are realistic. You will probably find that even small steps with your project will be hugely rewarding!



SOURCES OF FUNDING

There are more potential sources of funding than you think! Read on for ideas about where to start looking for money to get your project up and running.



Your Community

➤ Small-scale fundraising within the community - at events, for example - can be great for bringing a group together, but may raise only limited amounts.

➤ **Crowdfunding** is another way of engaging the wider community, and can raise large sums of money. There are many crowdfunding platforms, most of which also offer matched crowdfunding schemes - and it can all seem quite confusing. Social innovation charity Nesta have lots of **resources** to help explain what's involved, including a useful **toolkit** to get you started with the process if you decide it's right for your project.

Corporations and Local Businesses

➤ Corporate sponsorship and donations are a potentially significant source of funding. Big business is increasingly concerned with corporate social responsibility, and those operating locally may be looking for ways to invest in the community. Even if there's nothing obvious about charitable donations or community outreach on a company's website, it's definitely worth calling, emailing, explaining your project - and just asking.

➤ Engaging with **corporate volunteering** may be a way of sourcing manpower for intensive project phases such as building or planting. You can register to advertise for volunteers in Oxfordshire with **OCVA**.

➤ Many companies, for example supermarkets, have community funds that provide small to medium sized grants to community projects of social value.

National Funding Bodies

➤ There are innumerable national funding bodies supportive of projects that build communities, improve public spaces and promote biodiversity. There's a few that are really worth looking into. The **Landfill Communities Fund** provides potentially significant amounts of funding to projects concerned with, amongst other things, provision of and improvements to public spaces and amenities, reclamation of unused land, and conservation and promotion of biodiversity. **The National Lottery Community Fund** supports projects that will build relations, improve spaces, and further opportunities for local communities. **The Royal Countryside Fund** has a focus on supporting rural communities, so will only be worth considering for projects in less urban areas.

➤ CAG Oxfordshire has a great **funding database** with many other options.

Oxfordshire Specific Funding

➤ The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) awards grants of up to £25,000 to projects through the **Local Environment Fund**.

➤ Oxford Community Voluntary Association awards grants of up to £5,000 through the **Connected Communities Fund**, and more flexible amounts through the **Well Together Programme**.

➤ The Oxfordshire Community Foundation offers **Community Capacity Grants** of up to £20,000.

➤ **Special Project Grants** of up to £500 are available to **Oxfordshire CAGs**.

District Council Funding Schemes Across Oxfordshire

Oxford City Council runs the **Community Impact Fund** which has three rounds per annum and can award up to £5,000 to organisations per round. There's also the **Oxford Lottery**, and other **funding available through ward councillors**.

West Oxfordshire District Council funds projects with community crowdfunding via **Westhive**, and by means of **Service Level Agreements** worth up to £25,000 per annum.

Vale of White Horse District Council has a **Climate Action Fund** which awards grants of up to £5,000, and runs the **White Horse Community Lottery**.

South Oxfordshire District Council runs the **SO Lottery**, and a **Councillor Community Grant Scheme** with £5,000 available per district councillor. There's also a **new fund for nature recovery projects** (run in partnership with TOE) with grants of up to £15,000 available.

Cherwell District Council runs a **Community Lottery**, and **Brighter Futures in Banbury** will fund projects of benefit to the community in certain areas with up to £3,000.



Money raised through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy filters down to District, Town and Parish Councils. Some of the schemes above will be funded by this money. Take time to explore exactly how this works in your area, as there may be other ways of accessing local funding.

WHAT TO GROW

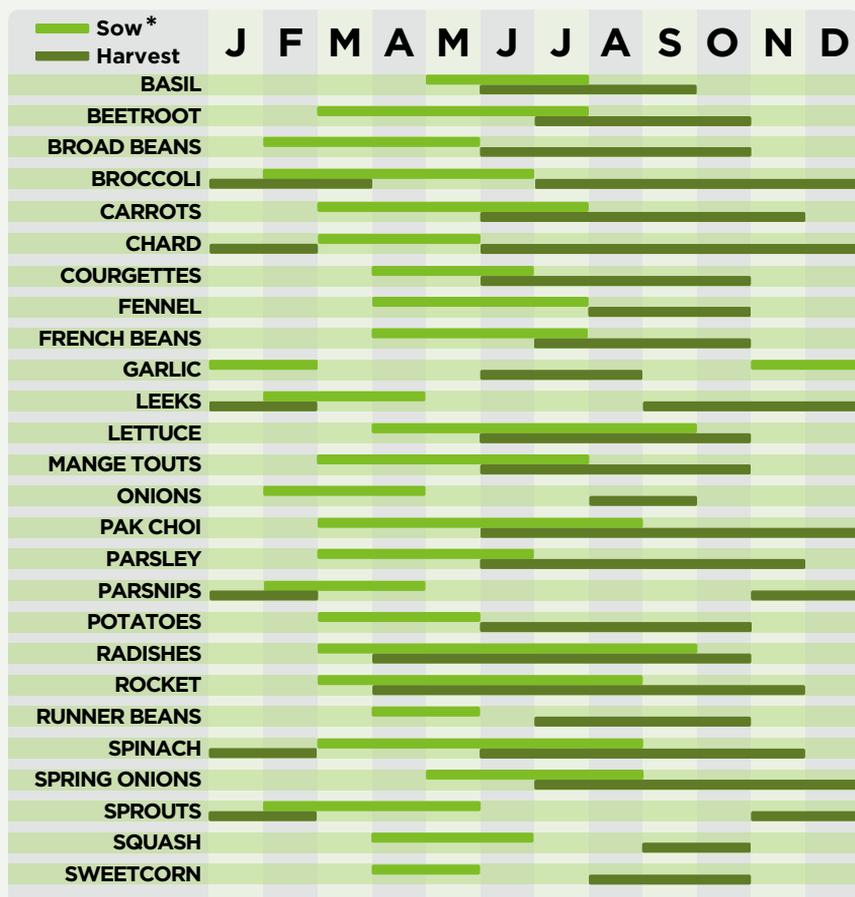
🌱 If you've limited time and space, go for **low maintenance perennials**. Herbs are easy to care for and will stay small if you constrain their roots.

🌱 **Soft fruit bushes** need more room, and you'll have to invest some time into staking, tying up etc. Like herbs, they're great for casual foraging.

🌱 If you'd like to grow **fruit trees**, spend time looking into different **rootstocks** to ensure the mature tree will be a suitable size. Trees will also need harvesting on an annual basis so as to avoid complaints about falling fruit, and may occasionally need dead or damaged branches pruning away.

🌱 If you've poor quality soil, sowing **wildflowers** might be the the best plan - they'll provide nectar and food for a variety of non-human life forms!

🌱 And if you've the time, space and group commitment for growing **annual veg**, here's a guide to sowing and harvesting times for some common edibles...



*direct sowing outdoors - if you have space indoors or a greenhouse, you can probably sow a month earlier.

RECIPES AND NUTRITION

Even simple recipes from low maintenance perennials can have amazing health benefits. Here are a few ideas to get you inspired...



BRASSICAS CABBAGES, KALE, SPROUTS, BROCCOLI...

High in fibre and fantastically **nutrient dense**, these leafy green vegetables contain **glucosinolates** - compounds found in no other fruit or veg - which have many beneficial properties. Research has shown that eating brassicas can **help prevent against cardiovascular disease and some cancers.**⁴

Try stir-frying finely chopped cabbage or kale with chilli, ginger and garlic. Broccoli and sprouts also roast well! Almost all brassicas make great soup.



HERBS BASIL, DILL, PARSLEY, MINT, CORIANDER, OREGANO...

The healing properties of herbs have been known for thousands of years, and in many cases the benefits are now backed up by scientific research. Dill may **soothe menstrual cramps,**⁶ basil may help **manage blood sugar,**⁷ and mint can **ease digestive discomfort.**⁸ Almost all are **high in antioxidants** - generally a good thing!

Remember herbs can season sweet, as well as savoury dishes! Rosemary, mint, lavender, and basil all work well with sweet flavours. Leafy herbs are also great for making sauces such as pesto and chimichurri: try blending herbs like basil, pesto, coriander or oregano with a little oil, some nuts and hard cheese. You can also make an aromatic tea by just adding boiling water to a few rinsed leaves.



BERRIES BLUEBERRIES, RASPBERRIES, CRANBERRIES...

Rich in **antioxidants** and **anti-inflammatory compounds**, many berries are also high in **vitamin C, flavanoids,** and **manganese.** Studies have shown they may **slow age-related memory loss, improve blood sugar levels,** and **boost immunity** amongst many other benefits.⁵

Try cooking with a little sugar and puréeing to make a coulis to eat with muesli and yoghurt for breakfast, or with ice cream for dessert. You could even freeze it to make ice lollies!

Sourer berries like cranberries and lingonberries can be sweetened more generously to make jams and sauces.



ROOT VEG CARROTS, BEETS, TURNIPS, RADISHES...

The many different colours of these vegetables are a clue to the wide variety of nutrients they contain! Carrots are rich in **beta carotene** which may help **protect vision;** beetroot is a good source of **nitrates,** which **help regulate blood pressure;** and the humble radish may have both anti-diabetic and anti-cancer properties.⁹

It's not just the roots of these vegetables that can be eaten - the tops are also edible. Chop into salads or cook as you would other greens. Many root veg are great eaten raw with dips - a great way to keep all the nutrients. Try roasting with honey and balsamic vinegar, pickling, or even juicing to make a smoothie!

GLOSSARY

CAG Oxfordshire - Community Action Groups Oxfordshire.

Community Infrastructure Levy - A charge that can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area, for the purposes of funding local infrastructure.

Corporate volunteering - Employer initiatives that support and enable employees to give their time to charitable causes.

County Council - The local authority with responsibility for education, transport, Highways, etc.

Crowdfunding - A method of financing whereby small amounts of money are donated by a large number of individuals, typically via an online platform.

District Council - There are five district councils for different areas of Oxfordshire: Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council. Your local district council normally has responsibility for town planning, housing, household waste, etc.

Gabion basket - A metal cage or box that can be filled with various materials and used as a retaining structure or to form walls.

Ginnel - A passageway between buildings.

Highways Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) - The Highways Department has responsibility for roads, cyclepaths, footpaths etc.

HRA - the Housing Revenue Account is the local council account that records income and expenditure on district council owned land and property.

Hugelkultur - A traditional method of building raised garden beds with mounds of logs and plant debris.

Land registry search - An online government service that provides information about land ownership.

Natural surveillance - The idea that the presence of people, and being within sight of people, has the potential to prevent anti-social behaviour.

Permaculture - Land management systems and practices that are sustainable, self-sufficient, and respect natural eco-systems.

Public liability insurance - Insurance that covers a group or individual against claims made by members of the public in case of accident or injury caused by their activities.

Rootstock - The rootstock determines the size, disease resistance, hardiness and fruit-bearing tendencies of a fruit tree.

Section 106 agreements - Agreements between a developer and a local planning authority about measures the developer must take to reduce their impact on the community. They often involve payments to the local authority for local infrastructure improvements.

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EXTENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY



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RESOURCES



Please scan the QR code for a list of helpful resources relating to the contents of this document.

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