

‘Grow Community – Sopwell’ invite views on a community garden in Sopwell ward.



*An image of FoodSmiles’ Russell Avenue edible food garden in St Albans City Centre
(photo with permission from FoodSmiles)*

Public Engagement

Local residents are asked to take part in a survey on a proposed community garden in Sopwell ward, St Albans

You are invited to comment on where you think the garden would be best located, as well as other views you have on this project.

The community garden will be created and maintained by a local volunteer gardening group, ‘Grow Community – Sopwell’, on council land and funded by a community grant.

The Council and ‘Grow Community – Sopwell’ will consider and act on all feedback it can.

The survey should take around 5 minutes to complete.

About the Community Garden

The garden will grow edible and wildlife-friendly plants without pesticides or artificial fertilisers.

Initially, the site will simply consist of two raised beds (2.4m long, 1.2m wide and 50cm high) to grow fruit and vegetables in. These will be bordered by plants: a variety of edible, wildlife-friendly and attractive low-maintenance plants. The aim is to slowly and gradually expand the site over time to a size of approximately 250 square meters.

Local residents will be invited to help care for the plants, and to pick them for eating when they are ready.

Monthly maintenance and teaching sessions will take place at the garden once coronavirus guidelines allow. Additionally, occasional small community events may take place there.

Three potential sites have been identified as suitable locations for the community garden:

Option A: An area next to Berners Drive Play Area



Option B: An area on Holyrood Crescent Green



Option C: An area on Holyrood Crescent further along from the play areas



Similar Projects in St Albans

Two similar projects run in St Albans City Centre by another group called FoodSmiles. The community gardens there are enjoyed by visitors to the city centre and local residents alike.

Although they suffer the occasional incident for being out in public, they believe the gardens have reduced anti-social behaviour overall, and they are constantly being told how the gardens have improved the area.

There are various other community gardens around the district.

About 'Grow Community – Sopwell'

'Grow Community – Sopwell' supports Sopwell residents to grow their own food at home and in community spaces. They also encourage people to reduce food waste and look after the local environment, as well as providing activities to bring the community together.

The Need and What Could Be Achieved

According to 'Community Profile - understanding our community v3'. SADC. October 2015 and 'Sopwell Ward Profile'. SADC. May 2018, Sopwell ward is one of among the most disadvantaged areas in St Albans.

Many indicators in Sopwell are lower than the District average. It has one of the highest rates of people with no qualifications, unemployment, residents reporting their day-to-day activities are limited, self-reported bad and very bad health, and the lowest life expectancies.

In addition, Sopwell has a diverse population, yet it lacks inclusive community facilities, which have been lost over the years. Unlike most other St. Albans wards and parishes, there is no dedicated community building, no social club, no library, no central pub, very few shops and a limited bus service.

An inclusive community gardening project will provide free, healthy and seasonal food, and opportunities for physical activity for residents in Sopwell.

Gardening and community activities are also known to improve mental health and well-being.

The project will help raise awareness of sustainable food growing and local environmental issues.

The activities planned by 'Grow Community – Sopwell' will help reduce isolation and loneliness especially among the older residents, mums at home with children, and new residents, and will foster good relationships within the neighbourhood.

Join Us

You can join 'Grow Community – Sopwell' and follow their activities online.

Web: <https://cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/grow/>

Email: growsopwell@gmail.com

Facebook/Twitter/Instagram: GrowSopwell

WhatsApp notifications: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/ESbzJMRERMZ4KZ7eB0pGBF>

Contact

For more information or any questions contact:

Kate Swindells (Chair) at GrowSopwell@gmail.com

Or

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