

Winter 2024



Summer 2026

Sustainbility in Action

THE ALLOTMENT

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Discover









As a family, we have never been what you would call serious gardeners, we were always much more of the “lets plant it and see what happens” variety. We love being outdoors and my family often joke that I am solar powered as during the lighter months of the year I am outside as often as possible. At home we have previously grown potatoes, leeks, chilli’s and tomato’s however we started to crave more space.

So, during lockdown, like many, we applied to our local council for an allotment. Over two years later, we were finally offered a plot. The plot was overgrown and had not been touched in over 10 years and had previously been used for chickens.

The plot is less than half a mile away from our house and we can walk a direct route through the local community hospital grounds, with our home on one side and the allotment on the other.

The site itself sits in a sheltered position, surrounded by trees with a cycle track on one side and a road on the other, which helps buffer the worst of the weather.

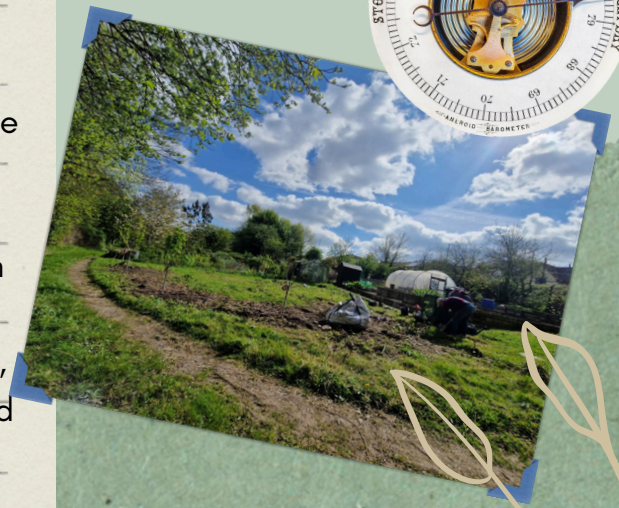
Last year we were could not do as much as we had hoped due to personal injury, however this year we are ready and able to put the time, energy and elbow grease it deserves. We are really looking forward to seeing what the next few months bring.

The site









Our allotment plot is triangular in shape and is a traditional 10-perch plot, using the old measurement is still common on UK sites, which works out at roughly 250 square metres. It is on the edge of the site, sitting on a slight incline, this gives us plenty of light but also makes us more aware of drainage, frost pockets and the occasional gust that funnels through the open side. It also means we need to think carefully about where we plant, especially when choosing spots that prefer either shade or full sun.

We began by simply spending time at the plot, walking the boundaries and getting a feel for its shape, light and soil. Clearing the overgrowth and the rubbish, including an unrepairable poly tunnel, multiple plastic bags and bin liners that were buried under grass and rusty metal poles, helped us to understand what was underneath and which areas needed the most attention. My husband also spent many back breaking hours clearing bramble and couch grass.

Sensory Discoveries



Sight - colours, shadow, light, moving insects and birds

Sound - bird song, wind through the grass and trees, distant traffic

Smell - blossom, plants flowers, vegetable , the soil, wet grass, cut grass, seeds

Taste - furuits, vegetable, fresh air

Touch - weather on my face, soil, water, grass, seeds, weeds, stingy nettles!

Movement - digging, planting, watering, heavy lifting

Interoception - feeling calm, at peace, connectededness, tension release, a quiet mind

The smells, sights and sounds are always the first things I notice when I arrive at the allotment. They greet me before anything else, grounding me in the moment and showing me how the space has changed since my last visit. Each shift in birdsong, each new scent of soil or blossom, each small movement in the hedges brings a quiet feeling of peace, a reminder that the allotment is a living place, growing and changing alongside us.

The Greenhouse









We knew we needed a greenhouse as some of the things we love growing, especially chillies and tomatoes, simply do better with the extra warmth and protection.

On our exposed, end-of-site plot, they'd struggle outside, so having a sheltered space to start them off and keep them happy felt essential. It means we can grow the varieties we enjoy without worrying about the Welsh weather getting the better of them.

We managed to source a greenhouse for free from a local selling site, collected it, and then spent the next few weekends putting it together like an old attic jigsaw puzzle with half the instructions missing. It was a real labour of love, but seeing it finally standing felt like a huge step forward for the plot.

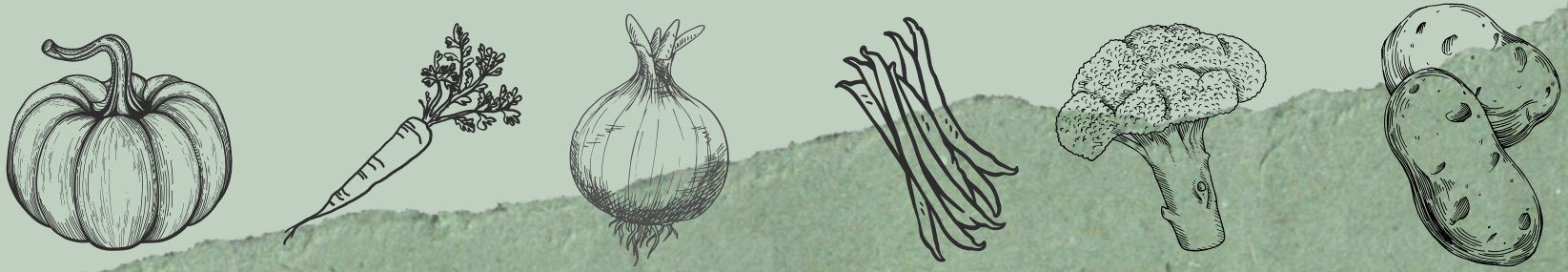
Over time, the greenhouse has become one of the most important parts of our allotment. We've gradually developed the space, adding preloved shelving, a potting bench we built ourselves from old pallets, an old dog bed and rescued bread trays, all while trying to keep things as sustainable as possible.

What began as a place to shelter young plants has grown into a productive hub where we now raise a variety of chillies, peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers and even a few potatoes. It's a space that's evolved with us, helping us grow the crops we love while making the most of the warmth and protection the greenhouse provides.

Explore



1. Pumpkin – Cucurbita Pepo
2. Carrot – Daucus carota subsp. sativus
3. Onion – Allium Cepa
4. Dwarf Beans – Phaseolus vulgaris
5. Broccoli – Brassica oleracea var. italica
6. Potato – Solanum tuberosum



Explore

1. Tomato – Solanum lycopersicum
2. Cucumber – Cucumis sativus
3. Chilli peppers – Capsicum annuum
4. Broccoli – Brassica oleracea var. italica
5. Leek – Allium ampeloprasum var. porrum
6. Pumpkin – Cucurbita Pepo













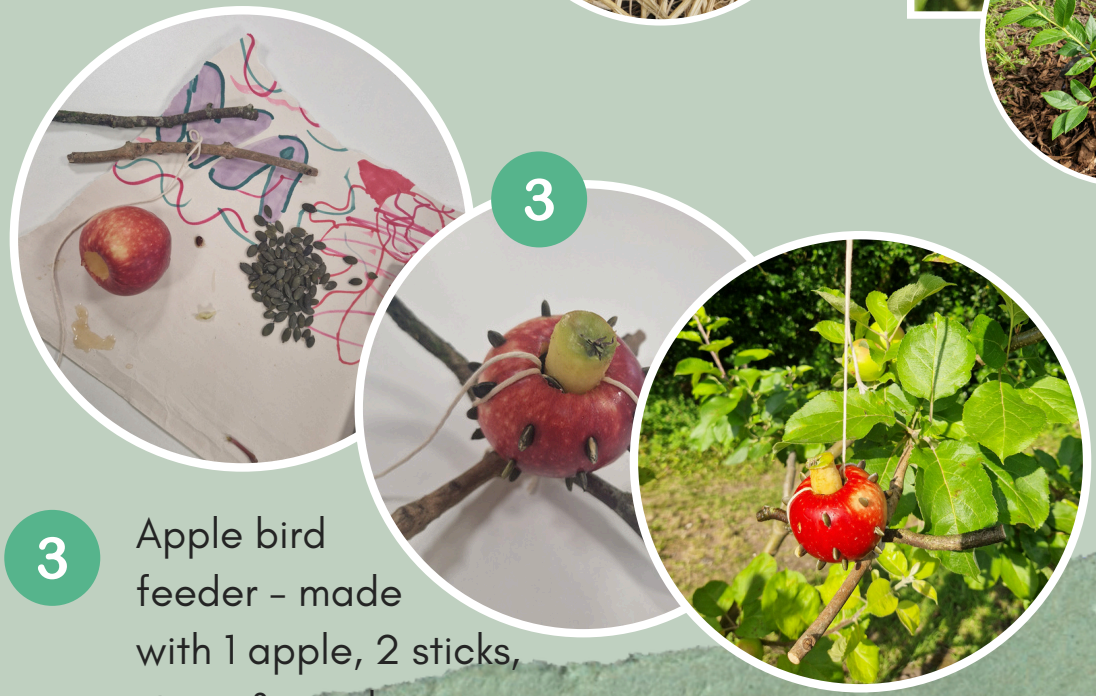




Explore







1 Strawberry - Fragaria × ananassa

2 Fruit trees - apple (Malus domestica), cherry (Prunus avium), Plum (Prunus domestica), Pear (Pyrus communis), Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum)

3 Apple bird feeder - made with 1 apple, 2 sticks, string & seeds

Conserve









We added a water butt and built our compost heap early on using old pallets, it was a simple and sustainable way to start collecting rain water and improving the soil. The plot had been abandoned for so long that we knew the ground would need time, nutrients and organic matter to recover.

By setting up a compost area early, we could recycle weeds, grass cuttings and kitchen scraps into something useful, while also creating a tidy, contained space for all the clearing work. It felt like a small but important first step in bringing the allotment back to life.

We also planted four fruit trees, knowing they'd need time to settle into the soil. Our idea was to create a natural boundary around the open plot that would also attract pollinators and birds, while giving us some gentle shade and shelter as the space began to come back to life.

Little by little, these early actions helped us to connect to the allotment and begin shaping it into a space that felt like ours.

Conserve



An old pallet to build a bug hotel



Old guttering to plant and support the leeks

More recently, we've used more materials that were bound for the tip to create new growing spaces and improve water conservation across the plot.

We've added guttering to grow leeks, used old pallets and leftover decking boards to build raised beds and crafted a bug hotel to support local wildlife.

We've also repurposed plastic sheeting to channel extra rainwater into two additional water butts, and created a small water source to attract and protect insects, birds and other wildlife.

These small, sustainable additions have helped us make the most of what we have, turning discarded materials into useful features that support both our crops and the wider ecosystem.



Base of a plant pot keeping the supporting canes together

Conserve





















Image 1: Sustainable Development Goals, (Website image: Earth Changers, 2025)

Share



Conservation in small community spaces matters to us, our allotment has shown how even a modest plot can support wildlife, improve local biodiversity and create a calm, sensory-rich space for wellbeing. The more satisfied we feel with the space, its naturalness, its usability and the way we have shaped it over time, the more we use it. This mirrors research showing that greenspaces improve public health and wellbeing not simply because they exist, but because people perceive them positively and choose to spend time in them (Hua *et al.*, 2025). Our allotment has become that kind of place for us, a space where we walk our dog to, a space we sahre with other plot holders, a space we've nurtured, feel connected to, and return to often, which strengthens both our relationship with nature, our local community and our own sense of wellbeing.



I have shared what we have learnt around growing produce with other plot holders and one of my childcare settings, they have a small allotment style area in their garden and are due to harvest their first potatoes next week to celebrate their last week of the summer term.



By choosing to reuse materials, collect rainwater and create habitats for insects and birds, we're contributing to the health of the wider environment around us. Research highlights that allotments are among the most floristically rich urban habitats, packed with pollinator friendly plants and are directly shaped by peoples personal investments in nature. Small green spaces like allotments collectively play a significant role in urban sustainability and community wellbeing, making these everyday conservation efforts both meaningful and impactful (Ellis, 2025).

Share



















To date, we've shared our produce with family and friends, sometimes as freshly picked vegetables, other times as homemade jams and cakes made from the fruit we've grown. We've also been really lucky to have family who want to be part of the journey. Early on, my dad helped us clear the plot and plant the fruit trees, and even though he lives in France he asks for regular allotment updates. More recently my in-laws have chipped in with trays for our tomato plants, have plans to help us get a shed and have kindly watered the allotment whenever we're away. My father-in-law especially enjoys the walk to the plot and often checks in to see if we need a hand, which has made the whole experience feel even more shared and supported.

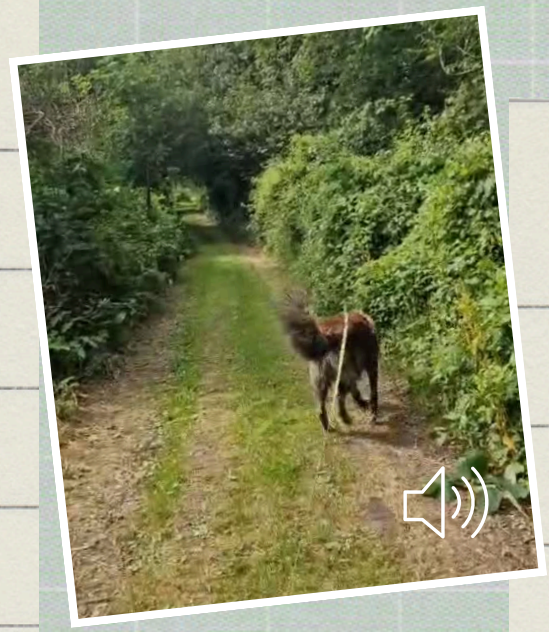
Our Allotment Poem

Once left to bramble, quiet and still,
A forgotten corner beneath the hill.
Grass grown wild where no one tread,
Old soil sleeping in its earthy bed.

We stepped inside with patient hands,
Learning the light, the slope, the land.
Four fruit trees planted, roots set deep,
A promise made the plot could keep.

A greenhouse built from pieces found,
Puzzle-like, spread across the ground.
Now warmth and life begin to rise,
Chillies glowing under Welsh skies.

Pallets stacked become a bench,
Decking boards give us a growing trench.
Beds take shape, a bug hotel stands,
Crafted slowly by our own hands.



Watch carefully and you will see small white flutters across the video, these are cabbage butterflies



Image 2: The Cabbage Butterfly, (Website image: Lush Gardens, 2026)

Water butts brim with gathered rain,
Guttering guiding each silver chain.
Plastic sheeting saved from waste
Turns storms into something we can taste.

And here, wellbeing grows as much as food,
In quiet moments, in a calmer mood.
The scent of soil, the hum of bees,
The rustle of wind through sheltering trees.

Warm sun on skin, cool earth under nails,
Birdsong threading through the trails.
Each sense awake, each breath a pause,
A gentle space that asks for no applause.

Bit by bit, the space transforms,
From tangled past to thriving forms.
A plot once quiet, now full of cheer,
Growing food, hope, and a new year.

John Muir Award



John Muir (1838-1914), a Scottish born naturalist, writer and conservationist whose work shared his belief that everything in nature is connected and subsequently laid the foundation for modern environmental protection. He campaigned to protect wild spaces, arguing that their intrinsic value should be safeguarded for future generations. Muir's writing inspired millions to appreciate the natural world and his activism helped establish some of the first protected landscapes in the world (Sierra Club, 2026).

Although his early views on indigenous people were flawed, through his work his perspective changed which led him to admiring indigenous stewardship and further supporting indigenous rights and originations.

His belief that people should discover, explore, conserve and share their experiences of nature directly shaped todays sustainability movement. His legacy continues and encourages us to care for local spaces because very act of stewardship contributes to a healthier environment (John Muir Trust, no date).

Our allotment reflects the same sustainable values and has become the perfect place to carry out the John Muir Award. Everything we do there naturally reflects its four aims.

We ***discover*** the space each time we visit, noticing new growth, wildlife and seasonal changes. We ***explore*** by creating growing areas, building structures and learning how the land responds to our care. Our sustainable choices – reusing materials, collecting rainwater, planting for pollinators and creating habitats – are everyday acts of ***conservation*** that help the plot thrive.

Finally through conversations, photographs, poems, reflections and the scrapbook itself, we ***share*** our journey, showing how a small community space can support nature, wellbeing and a deeper connection to the outdoors.

Just as Muir argued that meaningful conservation begins with personal connection and everyday stewardship, our allotment shows how a small community space can support biodiversity, wellbeing and a stronger relationship with the natural world.

Timeline








2024







2026





