

Edinburgh Community Backgreens Initiative

PROJECT UPDATE | SEPT 2006

Introduction

This leaflet has been prepared to give an update on the progress of the Community Backgreen Initiative. It should be read in conjunction with the project description leaflet for a full understanding of the initiative. If you did not receive the project description, it can be obtained by contacting Re:Solution see details at end of the report.

Pilot Projects

Work is continuing at the two pilot sites at Dalry and Wheatfield. The volunteer teams started back on site in April 2006. They will pick up from the great work done by the volunteers during the resident volunteer workshops held between August and October 2005. 27 tenement backgreens were cleared and 3 lorry loads of rubbish were removed.

Over the winter we carried out participative workshops to prepare outline designs for the implementation of the community backgreens. Residents commented upon the range of features they wished to have on site, and where they would be located. These factors were incorporated into outline designs which are described overleaf.

Growth of the Initiative

With the success of the 2005 pilot projects we will be broadening out the Community Backgreens Initiative to five more sites in 2007. Five community backgreen associations were established in April/May 2006.

In September 2006, the seven associations founded Edinburgh Community Backgreens Association as a

company limited by guarantee. A board of directors have been appointed by the associations.

The company will be used as a vehicle for large scale funding applications to support the costs of delivering the community backgreen initiative, and to provide an ongoing service to maintain the community backgreens.

Community Composting Operation

In October 2005, the initiative was successful in attracting funding for a study to investigate the feasibility of providing composting facilities in the community backgreens.

The proposed composting system would involve the construction of a shed in the centre of each site which would house a 'Rocket' In-Vessel composter. This composting machine allows for all kitchen waste to be composted in a safe enclosed environment resulting in compost which will be used within the community backgreen. Residents will collect meat, fish and vegetable scraps in a 'kitchen caddy' with a biodegradable liner. When full the liner is tied up and taken down to the composting shed where it is deposited through a hatch into a hopper. The Rocket will be operated by the Assistant Green Caretaker.

It is intended for the composting shed to include a separate space for gardening tools and equipment and an area for community activities. The illustration shows the proposed 'community backgreen shed' for the Wheatfield site. The top half of the shed houses the Rocket In-vessel composter, the bottom half provides storage space for tools and equipment and a work bench for various community activities.



Transformation of the Wheatfield site

Wheatfield Community Backgreen Outline Design

Wheatfield is the larger of the two pilot sites, 262 households in 21 tenements. The majority of households are small, one or two bedroomed. 13% of the properties are owned by the Dunedin Canmore Housing Association, the remainder are split between owner occupier and private rented.

The 21 backgreens were cleared of weeds and rubbish by 34 volunteer residents during workshops held between August and October 2005. A small temporary toolshed has been erected in the middle of the site for the use of the volunteers.

The illustration below and on the community backgreen model page show the outline design prepared following participative design workshops. A framework of paths will be used to partition the site. The paths are set

6m from the tenements to maintain the privacy of the ground floor flats. The margin around the site will be covered with a wood chip mulch to suppress weeds and planted with fruit trees and bushes. The margin will also provide sites for drying greens and bike sheds.

The central area will be divided into four greens, the largest of which will provide a focus for community activity - 'village green'. A play area for little children and a BBQ area will be sited in the village green. In the centre of the site a 'community backgreen shed', will provide facilities for residents (see following pages). To the North of the shed will be a community allotment area for the use of residents. The greens will be separated by bands of mulched areas planted with fruit trees and bushes.



Dalry Community Backgreen Outline Design

Dalry Community Backgreen is a linear site of 7 tenements of 62 flats. 12 of the 62 households volunteered their time to clear a very overgrown area which was littered with a large build up of rubbish.

The survey of residents showed that there were no younger children living at the site, so no play facilities have been provided. However we expect that the site will provide a stimulating natural playground for visiting children.

The site has been split into four 'outdoor rooms' divided by mulched areas which like the Wheatfield site will be planted with fruit trees and bushes. These boundaries show little relationship with the actual legal boundaries

of the original backgreens. The central green will be developed as the 'village green' where we will locate the community backgreen shed and a summerhouse/BBQ area.

An allotment area hasn't been prescribed in the design, but should some residents show interest, part of the greens could be turned over to form small allotments.

